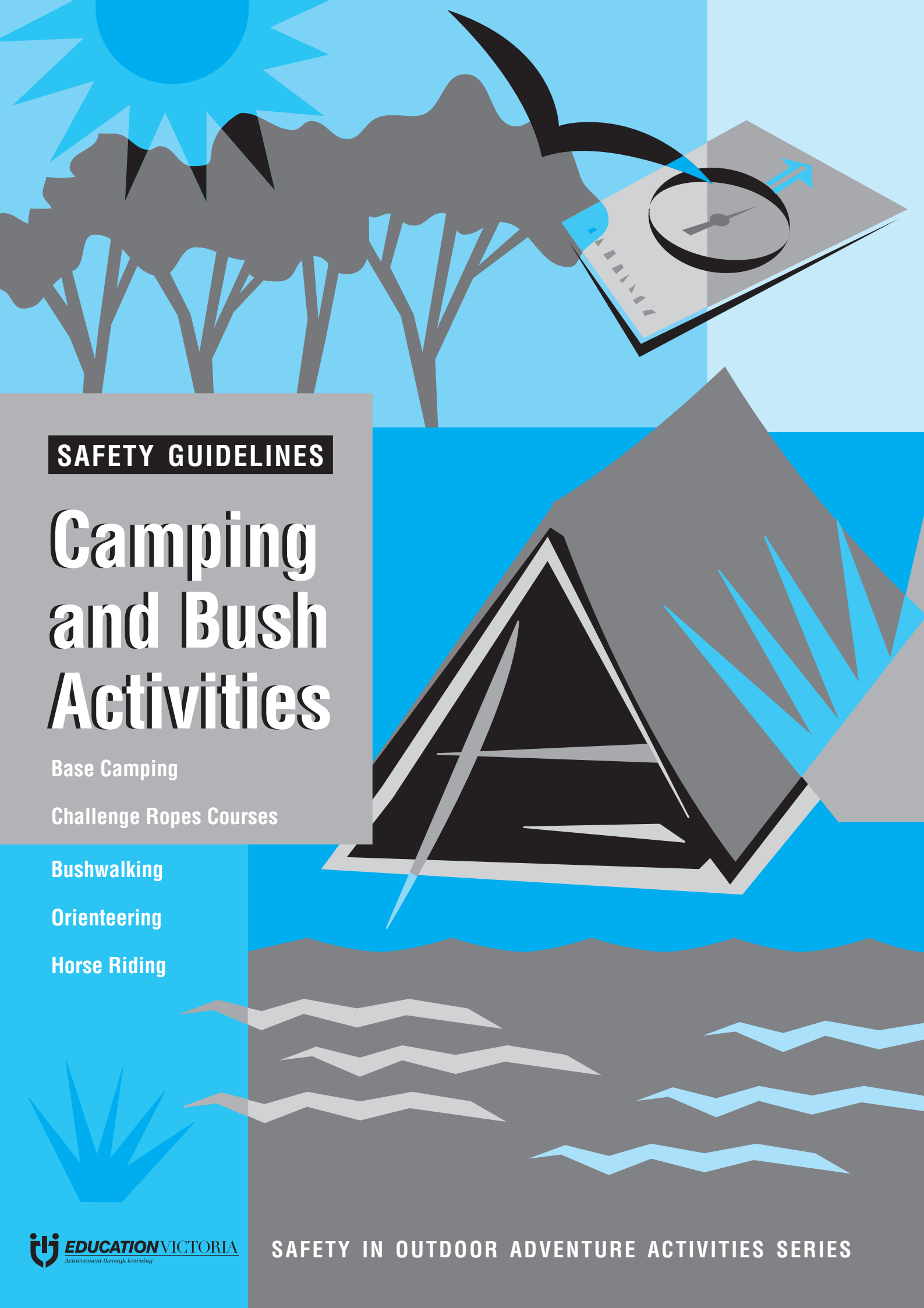

SAFETY GUIDELINES

Camping and Bush Activities

Base Camping

Challenge Ropes Courses

Bushwalking

Orienteering

Horse Riding

EDUCATION VICTORIA
Achievement through learning

SAFETY IN OUTDOOR ADVENTURE ACTIVITIES SERIES

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Camping and Bush Activities

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SAFETY IN OUTDOOR ADVENTURE ACTIVITIES SERIES

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Foreword

Safety Guidelines: Camping and Bush Activities provides Department of Education policy and guidelines for schools undertaking these activities. It is one of the books in the *Safety in Outdoor Adventure Activities Series,* which will progressively replace the publication *Safety in Outdoor Adventure Activities* (1992).

Outdoor adventure activities form part of both the Outdoor Education and the Physical and Sport Education components of the Health and Physical Education key learning area of the Curriculum and Standards Framework for Years Prep to 10, and the Physical Education and Outdoor Education subjects for the Victorian Certificate of Education.

The knowledge and skills gained through participation in outdoor adventure activities enables students to enjoy and interact with the natural environment. Traditionally, outdoor adventure activities have provided participating students with experiences that are uniquely challenging and that build self-esteem and self-confidence.

The policies and guidelines contained in this book are designed to enable school councils, principals and teachers to plan, organise and conduct safe student activities.

I would like to acknowledge the contribution of the Camping Association of Victoria Inc, the coordinating writer Dr Gale Orford, and numerous teachers and other experts from a range of organisations and associations for their valuable input to this publication.

Safety Guidelines: Camping and Bush Activities provides the minimum requirements for government schools undertaking base camping, challenge ropes courses, bushwalking, orienteering and horse riding activities.

Peter Allen

DIRECTOR OF SCHOOLS

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1. Introduction

1.1 Adventure activities

Adventure activities are those activities that involve greater than normal risk such as:

- travel into a relatively undeveloped area of country in which vehicular contact is difficult and/or uncertain
- less than normal contact, in person or by telephone, with medical and other public services available in normal day-to-day life
- exposure to the natural elements with less than the normal physical protection provided in day-to-day life
- confrontation with natural environmental challenges requiring greater reliance on personal resources than would normally be required in day-to-day life
- base camping, bushwalking, canoeing, caving, snow activities, orienteering, cycling, horse riding, rock climbing and abseiling, challenge ropes courses, gliding, swimming (other than school swimming programs), surf activities, water skiing, snorkelling, scuba diving, shooting, sailing, sailboarding, and similar activities.

1.2 Challenge and risk

In school situations, involvement in outdoor adventure activities provides students with the opportunity of experiencing a sense of achievement through participating in a variety of challenging situations involving contact with the natural environment.

By their nature, outdoor adventure activities involve some level of risk, whether undertaken in introductory phases in the school grounds or within the natural environment.

The level of risk and the resultant challenge is unique to each participant. Personal skill levels, knowledge of the activity and environment, attitude, confidence and previous experience contribute to each student's *perception* of the risk and challenge. It is this perception derived from participation in the activity that will impact on the outcomes gained by each student.

As the safety and welfare of students and staff is of paramount importance, each outdoor adventure experience should create a perception of risk and challenge but at the same time be organised and managed in such a way that students are engaging in a comparatively safe activity. The risks that are an integral part of the nature of outdoor adventure activities must be kept to an acceptable level. The implementation of effective risk management processes should ensure that all activities are conducted safely (refer 2.2 Risk and safety management).

1.3 Curriculum

Outdoor adventure activities are part of both the Physical and Sport Education and the Outdoor Education components of the Health and Physical Education key learning area of the Curriculum and Standards Framework for Years Prep to 10, and the Physical Education and Outdoor Education subjects for the Victorian Certificate of Education. When developing school policies and planning programs that involve outdoor adventure activities, reference should be made to the Outdoor Education and Physical Education components of the Health and Physical Education Course Advice.

The information provided in this book must be read in conjunction with the Department of Education's *Schools of the Future Reference Guide*. The requirements and guidelines for excursions and outdoor adventure activities contained in the Reference Guide apply to all government schools in Victoria.

2. Excursions—policy and guidelines

2.1 Legal liability

In addition to the professional obligation a teacher owes to students, there is a legal duty of care for principals and teachers to take such measures as are reasonable in the circumstances to protect a student in their care from risks of injury that the educator should have reasonably foreseen.

In excursions, this duty of care has two main aspects. The first is to provide adequate supervision. This requires not only protection from known hazards, but also protection from those risks that could arise (that is, those that the teacher should reasonably have foreseen) and against which preventative measures could be taken. The second is to provide safe and suitable buildings or shelter, grounds and equipment.

In both aspects, the duty of the teacher is higher than that of the ordinary citizen in that a teacher is obliged to protect a student in their care from harm or to assist an injured student, while the ordinary citizen may choose to do nothing in a similar situation.

This legal duty is imposed on the individual teacher, the principal and other staff who have students in their care and varies according to the particular circumstances. For example, an individual teacher is under a duty of care in performing supervisory duties, and the principal is under a duty of care to provide the supervision roster and to ensure that it is implemented.

To minimise the risks of injury, principals should implement risk and safety management processes (refer 2.2 Risk and safety management) for identifying and controlling hazards and risks as well as ensuring that teachers have appropriate first aid training.

Under the *Crown Proceedings Act 1958*, the Crown may be held liable to pay compensation for injuries or damages caused by the negligence of its servants or agents. It is, therefore, important that full details of accidents that may result in a claim are recorded and retained on file at the school.

2.2 Risk and safety management

Effective risk and safety management processes should be implemented to ensure that all outdoor adventure activities are planned and conducted safely. These processes will involve a systematic analysis of the activity, the equipment, the environment, the participants and the staff so that unacceptable risk factors can be identified and removed or suitably controlled. Basically, these processes will include:

- *identifying* hazards, risks and safety issues
- *managing* hazards, risks and safety issues through the development of a safety management plan
- *avoiding* any hazards and risks that cannot be satisfactorily controlled.

There is no simple formula for safety management planning that can cover all situations. Every outdoor session needs to be analysed to *identify* risks in such things as the nature of the activity, the location or venue, the characteristics of the participants, the experience and expertise of the staff and weather considerations. A decision can then be made about whether the safety issues can be *managed* or whether they should be *avoided* by not conducting the activity, or aspects of the activity.

To *identify* safety issues, consider:

- the physical, social and emotional needs of the participants and staff, including any disabilities and special medication needs
- the qualifications and/or experience of staff, including their strengths and limitations
- safety concerns inherent in the activity and location, such as sheer cliffs, deep and cold lake water, or highly flammable stove fuel
- the condition of equipment and its suitability for the activity and use by the students
- the possible effects of various weather conditions
- any potentially harmful hazards, such as a tree dropping a branch
- communication and access to assistance in an emergency
- school records of any previous incidents, accidents and 'near misses'.

The safety *management* plan is developed in response to the assessment of the risks so that they are reduced sufficiently for the activity to be safe. The plan should address:

- the qualifications and/or experience of staff specific to the activity, the nature of the group and the area to be visited (refer Appendix K Proforma: *Documentation of staff qualifications and experience or expertise in lieu of certification/accreditation*)
- the preparation of the participants, including sequential skill development, appropriate fitness development and thorough briefing prior to the excursion and the individual activities (refer Appendix J Proforma: *Documentation of participant preparation, prerequisite skills/knowledge*)
- the choice of activities, including their appropriateness for the age, maturity, physical stature and readiness of the students, and the relationship of the activities to the curriculum
- equipment maintenance procedures and checks (including personal clothing and equipment, special equipment for specific activities, transport, and equipment for emergencies)
- the use of protective clothing and equipment according to recommended practices for the activity (for example, riding helmets and correct footwear)
- the organisational arrangements for conducting the activity, including staff–student ratios, location, roles of staff, and the use of recognised safety measures, such as spotting and belaying
- group management arrangements, including the possibility of an additional activity where participants spend considerable time waiting their turn
- alternatives to the activity plan in case of weather changes, injuries or other circumstances
- the need for outdoor adventure activity venues and locations to be visited before the excursion and in the same season as the planned activities (for example, the route for a trip planned above the snowline in winter should be checked in winter, or in wintry conditions). Where a teacher intends to inspect a venue or location, either within or

outside normal school hours, prior approval should be sought from the principal. Principals should approve such inspection visits where they are necessary to ensure that appropriate safety requirements and educational objectives for the proposed activity are met

- procedures to be implemented (including the ongoing supervision of students) in emergencies such as storms, bushfire, floods, lost students, and severe injury or death of students and/or staff (refer 2.3 Emergency management planning, and appendices).

In instances where the risks to participants cannot be kept to an acceptable level, the potential risk should be avoided by excluding the activity from the program (refer Appendix I Proforma: *Analysis of activities for risk and safety management*).

2.3 Emergency management planning

All Department of Education, Victoria, schools are required to develop and maintain an emergency management plan that describes actions to be taken during and following an emergency to ensure the ongoing safety of students, staff and others. Schools should ensure that staff and students, where appropriate, know what the plan contains and, through the provision of appropriate training, what they are required to do during an emergency. Information about planning is contained in the Department of Education publication *Managing School Emergencies* (1997).

The responsibility of schools to plan for the safety of students and staff involved in school activities extends beyond planning for events occurring under normal circumstances. All school activities, regardless of where they are to be conducted, must be planned in such a way as to ensure that the safety of students and staff is maintained, and that students are adequately supervised, even during an emergency.

Emergency management planning should include:

- the range of emergencies covered
- a site plan (where appropriate)
- a general description of the area and environment
- an assessment of risks and hazards
- roles and responsibilities of staff and others
- procedures for reporting emergencies
- procedures to be followed by staff and students during an emergency
- alternative evacuation routes and assembly areas
- emergency services contact numbers
- measures to prevent or reduce the impact of emergencies that do occur
- arrangements for establishing recovery programs following emergencies
- an endorsement, where appropriate, by the relevant emergency services that the plan content is appropriate.

For additional emergency requirements and guidelines for excursions, refer 2.10 Emergency management.

2.4 Approval to conduct an excursion

Prior to an excursion in which students leave the school grounds for the purpose of engaging in educational activities, the approval of the school council or the principal must be obtained.

2.4.1 School council approval

The school council is responsible for the approval of:

- overnight excursions
- camps
- interstate and overseas visits
- excursions requiring sea or air travel
- excursions involving weekends or vacations
- adventure activities.

2.4.2 Principal approval

The principal is responsible for the approval of all single-day excursions other than those referred to above to be approved by school council.

2.4.3 Approval considerations

Before approving an excursion, consideration by the school council and/or principal needs to include:

- the contribution of the activity to the school curriculum
- the adequacy of the planning, preparation and organisation in relation to school policy and Department of Education policy and guidelines in:
  - *Schools of the Future Reference Guide*
  - *Managing School Emergencies* (1997)
  - *Safety in Outdoor Adventure Activities* (1992)
  - *Safety in Outdoor Adventure Activities Series* booklets
  - Curriculum and Standards Framework, Health and Physical Education
  - Health and Physical Education Course Advice—Outdoor Education
- the provisions for the safety and welfare of students (including those with a disability or impairment) and staff
- the experience and competence of staff relevant to the activities being undertaken
- the adequacy of the student supervision
- the cost.

Note: Schools that use campsites within Victoria, whether school owned or otherwise, are expected to only use those sites accredited by the Camping Association of Victoria Inc through the Australian Campsite Accreditation Program. Where schools use other venues such as caravan parks, motels/hotels or ski lodges, they may wish to refer to the Australian Campsite Accreditation Program accreditation criteria when undertaking their risk management assessment prior to confirming a booking (refer Appendix L Australian Campsite Accreditation Program).

2.4.4 Approval for joint excursions

Where school council approval is required, each school involved in a joint excursion must receive the approval of its own school council. Where principal approval is required, the principal of each participating school must give approval.

In such circumstances, a coordinating principal or teacher, agreed to by the principals of the schools concerned, should ensure that:

- the necessary organisational arrangements are undertaken
- supervision is adequate and that normal procedures for the conduct of the excursion are carried out
- parents are informed that their children may be supervised by teachers and other approved adults from the other school(s) during the excursion.

2.5 Approval for student participation

2.5.1 Parental consent

A parent must provide written consent for their child to take part in an excursion and any particular adventure activities that will be undertaken during the excursion.

Parental consent is required for the following reasons:

- for overnight excursions, to authorise the school to have the student in its care after normal school hours
- for day excursions, to authorise the school to take the student out of the school environment
- to enable the parent to alert the school to any medical condition or allergies of the student
- to authorise the school to consent to emergency medical treatment for the student
- for the parent to consent to any financial cost of the excursion
- for the parent to consent to the student being sent home from the excursion in the event of serious misbehaviour (refer 2.9.2 Acceptable behaviour and consequences).

Parents asked to sign consent forms must be given sufficient information about the nature of the proposed activity, the risks involved and the degree of supervision, to enable them to make an informed decision and to ensure the school obtains a proper consent. (For a suggested proforma refer Appendix A Proforma: *Parent excursion consent*.)

Consent forms are to remain at the school or to be taken on the excursion by the teacher-in-charge, and a list of participants and contacts in the case of emergency should be held by the designated school contact person (refer 2.10.3 Excursion contact person).

2.5.2 Student consent

Students eighteen years of age and over may sign consent forms on their own behalf. In situations where a student is under the age of eighteen years and is living separately and independently of parents, the consent of parents may be inappropriate or may be difficult to obtain. In such circumstances, where the principal is satisfied that:

- the student is living separately and independently of parents and other guardians, and
- the student is unable to obtain the required parental consent, or is unwilling to approach their parents, and

- the student has sufficient maturity, understanding and intelligence to be capable of making up their own mind on the issue in question (such students will generally be fifteen years and over)

then the student may:

- give consent in relation to medical treatment and participation in excursions and adventure activities if fully comprehending the nature and consequences of the activities
- enter into agreements with the school about the payment of excursion expenses.

2.6 Student medical information

It is essential that excursion staff have adequate and up-to-date medical information about students who are participating in each excursion.

In advance of each school council approved excursion a confidential medical information form (refer Appendix B Proforma: *Confidential medical information for school council approved excursions*) must be completed by:

- the parent of each student under eighteen years
- each student who is eighteen years and over
- in particular circumstances, students who are under eighteen years and who are living separately and independently (refer 2.5.2 Student consent).

The student confidential medical information forms provide opportunity to vary information given to the school annually for use during normal school hours and to ensure that staff have the knowledge and skills to manage the specific medical and first aid needs of each student.

The student confidential medical information forms must be taken on the excursion by the teacher-in-charge and must be accessible to other excursion staff in emergency situations. A copy of the forms and a list of participants and contacts should be held by the designated school contact person while the excursion is being held.

There should be an overall plan for managing student medication during an excursion, and desirably an individual management plan for each student who needs medication. In general, all medication is to be handed to a designated teacher prior to leaving on the excursion. All containers must be labelled with the student's name and instructions for administering the medication. In instances where it may be necessary or appropriate for students to carry their own medication (for example, asthma puffers, insulin, adrenalin), the approval of the teacher-in-charge must be obtained.

A student should not be denied attendance at an excursion, including a camp or swimming program, because the parent refuses permission for a blood transfusion. Transfusions or other courses of treatment are matters for legally qualified medical practitioners. Teachers cannot be held liable for medical treatment given against the wishes of a parent.

2.7 Supervision of students

2.7.1 Guidelines for supervision

Subject to Department of Education requirements and guidelines, the degree of supervision of students involved in school excursions is a matter for local decision. Department of Education guidelines provide the *minimum* requirements for staff–student ratios (refer *Schools of the Future Reference Guide*, staff experience and staff qualifications (in this document and other

Safety in Outdoor Adventure Series books)). In many instances, following the safety assessment for an activity, principals choose to implement enhanced measures to ensure the safety of students. Where students with disabilities and impairments are participating, staff–student ratios are likely to be higher.

Sufficient excursion staff to ensure appropriate and effective supervision must be provided. In deciding what constitutes sufficient excursion staff, the principal should take into account the guidelines contained in the publications *Safety in Outdoor Adventure Activities* (1992) and the *Safety in Outdoor Adventure Activities Series* books as well as:

- the qualifications and previous experience of the excursion staff and their knowledge of the area to be visited
- the age, maturity, abilities, experience and sex of the students
- the size of the group
- the nature and location of the excursion
- the activities to be undertaken
- any other relevant factors of which they are aware.

When requesting parental consent for a student to take part in an excursion, it is essential that the parents are provided with relevant details about the degree of supervision, the nature of the activity, and the risks involved.

In addition to more specific Department of Education guidelines, the following general guidelines for supervision apply:

- For the great majority of excursions, including those for which school council approval is required, the excursion must be under the control of a teacher employed by the Department of Education or the school council and at least one other excursion staff member must be present.
- For some excursions where it is considered safe and appropriate, principals may approve small group excursions where the supervision is provided by one or more excursion staff members who are employed by the Department of Education or school council (for example, school services officers such as integration aides and teacher assistants).
- In a small number of instances and for secondary-aged students only, principals may determine that direct supervision is not needed for activities involving small groups or individual students. In such circumstances, the teacher responsible for the activity should maintain a formal record containing:
  - a description of the activity, including locations
  - the names and ages of students involved
  - the time of leaving and returning to school.
- Where excursions involve overnight stays for mixed groups, excursion staff should include at least one person of each sex. In primary schools, this requirement may be waived where staff of each sex are unavailable.

2.7.2 Excursion staff

In addition to teachers employed by the Department of Education or the school council, excursion staff may include other adults on a volunteer or paid worker basis, such as parents, school services officers, community members, instructors, campsite staff and trainee teachers.

All approved excursion staff can be included in the staff–student ratio. School students cannot be used as excursion staff.

In approving excursion staff prior to the excursion, the principal or school council must:

- be satisfied that each excursion staff member is able to provide effective supervision of the activities involved (Refer Appendix K Proforma: *Documentation of staff qualifications and experience or expertise in lieu of certification/accreditation*)
- be satisfied that excursion staff do not have medical conditions that might put them or others at risk
- ensure that there are sufficient excursion staff to provide effective supervision of students. (For the great majority of excursions, including those types of excursions for which school council approval is required, there must be sufficient teachers employed by the Department of Education or the school council to maintain appropriate control of the excursion and of each activity. In most cases, teachers should comprise at least half of the excursion staff. However, where instructors are approved excursion staff, the teachers together with these instructors should comprise at least half the excursion staff.)
- ensure that where specialist instructors are used they:
  - have the necessary skills and/or qualifications for the activity
  - have appropriate experience for the age and skill level of the students
  - hold appropriate public liability insurance (for paid instructors only)
  - are able, if required and appropriate, to provide written procedures for the conduct of the activity and the supervision of the students
- ensure that the names of volunteer workers are recorded for the purposes of volunteer workers insurance.

In addition to the Department of Education requirements for police record checks for its employees, school councils may wish to develop a school policy that requires excursion staff who are not Department employees to undergo police record checks.

It is important that the specific roles and responsibilities of each staff member (teachers, instructors, campsite staff, volunteers etc) are clarified and understood by all staff and students prior to the commencement of the excursion.

Staff should be reminded that they owe a legal duty of care to the students during the entire period of the excursion and that the consumption of alcohol is inconsistent with the standard of professional conduct necessary to maintain community confidence in such activities.

Instructors

In some instances, schools may use specialist instructors to ensure that excursion activities are undertaken correctly and safely. These instructors can be included in the staff–student ratio with the prior approval of the principal/school council, and can be either paid or volunteers.

While instructors have the technical knowledge and expertise to instruct the students, the teachers continue to have responsibility for the general safety and welfare of the students, even where the teachers do not directly provide the actual instruction.

Campsite program staff

An increasing number of campsites now make program staff available to assist schools with their camp programs. These program staff can be included in the staff–student ratio with the prior approval of the principal and school council.

In some instances, schools may wish to include campsite program staff as instructors in the staff–student ratios for specific activities that require additional staff (for example, canoeing). In such circumstances, the campsite program staff must be in attendance and undertake their designated responsibilities for the duration of the specific activity.

In instances where campsite program staff are included in the overall staff–student ratio throughout the camp program, they must be on duty and available on the same basis as other staff included in the staff–student ratio. This will usually mean being available on a twenty-four-hour basis.

Camps accredited by the Camping Association of Victoria Inc through the Australian Campsite Accreditation Program that make program staff available, have written advice that describes the qualifications and/or experience of individual staff in the activities offered and the scope and limitations of the supervision available.

2.8 Preparation of students

Involvement in excursions and outdoor adventure activities is frequently a new and challenging experience for most students. Generally these experiences take place outside the school grounds and in the natural environment.

Therefore, it is essential that prior to their involvement in such activities, students are prepared educationally, physically and psychologically so that their experiences are enjoyable and educationally rewarding.

It is essential that school staff who are familiar with students' abilities and disabilities are involved in the planning of the entire excursion program to ensure that, as far as practicable, all students are able to participate with enjoyment and success. While students may need to be prepared in advance for particular activities, some modifications to activities may be needed to enable those with disabilities and impairments to participate.

Well in advance of a school program that is to involve excursions or outdoor adventure activities, the students and their parents should be provided with information about the program's educational objectives, the nature of the activities, the venue, any particular clothing and equipment requirements and the cost.

Prior to the program and before each activity, students need to be briefed about the organisational arrangements that will apply during the program/activity, the specific requirements for their participation, environmental impact considerations for the area to be visited, potential hazards and risks, safety arrangements and procedures to be followed in an emergency. Where particular skills and knowledge are a prerequisite to safe participation (such as lighting and refuelling a stove), evidence that students possess these skills and knowledge should be documented (refer Appendix J Proforma: *Documentation of participant preparation, prerequisite skills/knowledge*).

2.9 Student behaviour and discipline

2.9.1 Smoking and alcohol

No student is to be permitted to smoke or consume alcohol on any school excursion. It is suggested that parents and students are informed of this policy before departure and warned that any student who fails to observe this policy will be severely disciplined and, where appropriate, immediately returned to school or home.

2.9.2 Acceptable behaviour and consequences

Students and their parents need to be made aware that acceptable standards of behaviour will be expected during excursions.

Disciplinary measures applying to students on excursions should be consistent with the school's student code of conduct.

In extreme cases, following consultation with and approval of the school principal, excursion staff may determine that a student should return home during an excursion. In such circumstances, the parent should be advised of the:

- circumstance associated with the decision to send the student home
- time when the parent may collect the child from the excursion, or the anticipated time that the student will arrive home.

When returning a student home, consideration should be given to the age and maturity of the student when travelling arrangements are made.

It is recommended that schools ensure that parents signing the approval form for their child to attend the excursion consent to their child being sent home in the event of the child's serious misbehaviour on the excursion (refer 2.5.1 Parental consent).

Parents should also be advised that they will be responsible for any costs associated with the student's return.

2.10 Emergency management

The emergency management process in schools should extend to and incorporate all excursions (refer 2.3 Emergency management planning and the Department of Education publication, *Managing School Emergencies* (1997)).

The entire program and all activities must be planned in such a way as to ensure that the safety of students and staff is maintained during an emergency, and that students continue to be adequately supervised. Emergency procedures should, therefore, include the effects of an emergency on student supervision in the event of excursion staff being required to assist injured students or go for help.

All excursion staff (teachers, instructors, volunteers) and, where appropriate, students, need to be familiar with the specific procedures for dealing with emergencies on each excursion. In particular, emergency procedures pertaining to campsites should be explained as soon as practicable after arrival.

On days of extreme fire danger or a total fire ban, principals may need to cancel excursions at short notice. Where excursions are not cancelled, special fire safety precautions will be required.

2.10.1 Notification of school activity

In advance and preferably at least three weeks prior to a school council approved excursion or other activity that by its nature, location or timing may be hazardous, government schools should use the proforma, (refer Appendix C Proforma: *Notification of school activity*), to fax relevant details to the Emergency and Security Management Branch, Department of Education, Victoria, on fax (03) 9589 0543.

The details will be used to provide initial information to the emergency services during an emergency. Where additional information is required during an emergency, schools will be expected to provide it from the documentation prepared for the activity.

2.10.2 Communication during an emergency

In the event of an emergency, an accident or an injury to a participant or staff member, staff on the excursion should take appropriate emergency action and immediately notify the school principal. The principal should make arrangements for the Emergency and Security Management Branch, Department of Education, Victoria, to be telephoned immediately on (03) 9589 6266 (twenty-four-hour service).

For excursions held outside school hours, parents should be advised of telephone numbers (both during and outside school hours) of the designated school contact person (refer 2.10.3 Excursion contact person). While the students are on excursion, if parents have reason to believe that an emergency may have occurred (for example, through a media report), they should in the first instance liaise with the school contact person and not the excursion group directly. This will ensure that the telephone lines are kept free at the excursion site.

2.10.3 Excursion contact person

It is important that relevant details of each excursion are held by a designated school contact person and that the contact person is readily available during both school hours and outside of school hours.

Details should include:

- the location of the excursion participants at all times, including during travel
- the relevant telephone number(s) through which excursion staff may be contacted in an emergency
- the names and family contacts for all students and staff
- copies of the parental approval and medical advice forms
- where appropriate, the location, description and registration numbers of any vehicles used by excursion staff to transport students
- the location and telephone number of the nearest police station, or nearest park ranger station if more appropriate.

2.10.4 Mobile telephones and radios

School councils and principals may wish to consider equipping excursion groups and buses used to transport the students with mobile telephones to be used in emergency situations. Groups may need to be cautious about dependence on mobile telephones and need to ascertain where they will work and the location of the nearest telephone service. In more remote bush areas, other forms of communication such as UHF radios may provide another option.

2.10.5 Smoke detectors

Where indoor accommodation facilities do not have smoke detectors, it is recommended that schools supply their own detectors. Camps accredited through the Australian Campsite Accreditation Program have approved smoke detection devices/systems.

2.10.6 Identity tags

It is recommended that young students, or those who because of a disability or impairment may have difficulty in communicating in an emergency, should wear identity tags on excursions.

2.11 First aid

Principals and teachers have a legal duty to assist students who may be injured or ill, including the appropriate administration of first aid when necessary. As the range of activities undertaken on excursions is extensive, principals need to ensure that excursion staff have levels of first aid training appropriate to the excursion activities, location and any student disabilities, and that adequate and appropriate first aid kit(s) are available on the excursion. Principals should ensure that first aid training includes provision for dental injuries.

There is no 'ideal' or recommended first aid kit for all outdoor activities. Excursion staff should assess first aid needs specific to the activity, the location (particularly considering its remoteness), the student group, and their own level of first aid training to determine the suitable composition of a first aid kit for each excursion (refer 8.3 Providers of professional development, training, certification/accreditation, for sources of first aid kit information and first aid training).

3. Base camping

3.1 Preamble

A base camp refers to a site that has permanent or temporary accommodation, which may include huts, dormitories, mobile homes or tents. Base camping occurs when an excursion is located in one or more of the above-mentioned facilities.

Schools that use camping venues within Victoria, whether school owned or otherwise, are expected to use sites accredited by the Camping Association of Victoria Inc through the Australian Campsite Accreditation Program.

Where a school organises an excursion to a base camp, a range of outdoor adventure activities is frequently included in the program.

Specific safety guidelines, including requirements for staff–student ratios, staff experience and safety procedures for bushwalking, challenge ropes courses, horse riding and orienteering are to be found elsewhere in this book. Requirements and guidelines for additional outdoor adventure activities are contained in other books in the *Safety in Outdoor Adventure Activities Series* (refer 8.2 Print and video resources).

3.2 Staff–student ratio

A minimum of two excursion staff, one of whom is a teacher employed by the Department of Education or the school council, is required to supervise students participating in excursions that involve base camping.

The minimum staff–student ratio for base camping is 1:10.

Sufficient staff to ensure appropriate and effective supervision must be provided. In deciding what constitutes sufficient staff, consideration should be given to the age, maturity, abilities and experience of students, the size of the group, the nature and the location of the camp, and the activities to be undertaken (refer also 2.7 Supervision of students).

A higher ratio may also be required when the program includes outdoor adventure activities, when camps are conducted in more remote areas or when students with disabilities and impairments are involved.

3.3 Staff experience and qualifications

At least one staff member should have prior experience in managing students in a camping environment. Staff supervising students at a base camp should have between them prior experience in conducting the full range of activities included in the program. For staff training and/or accreditation/certification courses in camp activities, refer 8.3 Providers of professional development, training, certification/accreditation.

3.4 Planning and preparation

The planning and preparation for base camping should include the implementation of risk and safety management processes for identifying and controlling hazards and risks, and emergency management planning to identify actions to be taken during and following an emergency (refer 2.2 Risk and safety management, and 2.3 Emergency management planning).

Teachers responsible for planning an excursion involving base camping should develop a program that takes into account the age, interests, experience and abilities of the students. The program should include alternatives for activities that cannot proceed due to adverse weather, equipment failure or other reasons. It is desirable that the campsite be inspected prior to the activity to ensure that the program is appropriate to the venue and that the camp facilities and equipment are safe and suitable for use. The inspection provides an opportunity to identify any potential risks and hazards, to implement appropriate risk management processes, to develop an appropriate emergency management plan that incorporates safety procedures, and to identify an appropriate set of camp rules. It should be noted that where a teacher intends to inspect a proposed venue, either within or outside normal school hours, prior approval should be sought from the principal. Principals should approve such inspection visits where they are necessary to ensure that appropriate safety requirements and educational objectives for the proposed activity are met.

Consideration may need to be given to the special needs of students with disabilities and impairments. This could include:

- suitability of facilities, terrain and access for students in wheelchairs or those who have restricted walking capacity
- shower facilities
- arrangements for personal management, such as toileting and eating
- dietary needs
- additional space for dressing inside tents (for example, tents big enough to stand up in)
- sleeping bags with longer zips
- additional blankets or padding when sleeping in tents (this may necessitate vehicular transport)
- access to medical expertise.

3.5 Student preparation

As base camping is frequently the first type of overnight excursion experienced by students it is important that they are prepared for the experience of community living and the importance of:

- personal hygiene
- group hygiene—food preparation, dining and cleaning
- cooperation and teamwork during camp activities
- individual responsibility towards group safety
- reacting immediately and responsibly to emergencies.

Guidelines for adventure activities elsewhere in this document and in other books in this *Safety in Outdoor Adventure Activities Series* include other information on student preparation.

3.6 Clothing and personal equipment

Clothing and personal equipment should be appropriate for the range of activities included in the program and should cater for sudden changes in weather and seasonal risks associated with fires, snow and storms, and should include appropriate sun protection and personal safety items for the activities planned (for example, waterproof overpants, a whistle, a woollen hat or sunscreen).

Students with disabilities and impairments may need additional or specialised equipment and clothing over and above that required by other students. Consideration should be given to:

- specialised equipment (for example, communication aids, adapted cutlery, spare hearing aid batteries, shower chair or non-slip bath mat)
- additional changes of clothing and bed linen
- back-up manual wheelchairs for pushing over difficult ground
- wheelchair maintenance—spare tyres, tubes and a pump, recharging of batteries
- suitable clothing (for example, 'walkers' may be warm on an activity, but those in wheelchairs may need extra clothing).

3.7 Specific safety aspects

During the site inspection, equipment, facilities and other features that may constitute a potential risk should be identified. The briefing of students with regard to safety should include areas or items of equipment that are out of bounds, ones that may only be used under direct supervision, and ones that require adherence to specific procedures or specific care in their use. In particular, emergency procedures, including fire and evacuation procedures, should be explained to students as soon as practicable after arrival.

Special provisions may need to be made for things such as waterways, cliffs, rock ledges, wells, mine shafts, specialised recreational equipment, power tools, vehicles, fires, heaters and flammable materials storage areas. Local flora and fauna may also present risks in some circumstances.

3.8 First aid

A comprehensive first aid kit must be located at the venue. Portable first aid kits may need to be carried if activities are located away from the base camp (refer 2.11 First aid).

4. Challenge ropes courses

4.1 Preamble

Challenge ropes courses provide an opportunity for individual and/or group challenges requiring the application of individual and/or team skills. They foster self-confidence, group support and increased physical coordination and agility.

Challenge ropes courses are a combination of low and/or high activities called elements. The courses may be constructed of cable or rope in outdoor settings using trees or poles, or less frequently indoors in gymnasiums. Challenge ropes courses may include other activities such as log balances, walls and flying foxes (note that the construction of flying foxes in government school grounds in Victoria is not permitted, refer 4.9). Initiative programs using ropes courses may also involve students in activities that do not include the use of ropes.

Challenge ropes courses are increasingly a feature of base camp venues. It is essential that student participation in these courses is appropriately supervised at all times by experienced staff and that relevant staff–student ratios are followed.

4.2 Staff–student ratio

A minimum of two staff, one of whom is a teacher employed by the Department of Education or school council, and at least one who is suitably qualified or experienced in challenge ropes course activities, must always be present with the students.

The minimum staff–student ratio for a challenge ropes course that has a low level of difficulty and is compact in design is 1:12. Where the course has a higher level of difficulty, additional staff should be available to supervise at each of the more difficult elements when students are using them.

4.3 Staff experience and qualifications

Staff should have appropriate experience with challenge ropes courses. Where instructors are used, they should have considerable specialised expertise and experience as challenge ropes course practitioners. For staff training and/or certification/accreditation information, refer 8.3 Providers of professional development, training, certification/accreditation.

Other staff should have experience with the particular elements within the ropes course, and should have an awareness of the challenges of each element and the points where accidents are most likely to occur.

4.4 Construction and maintenance of challenge ropes courses

The construction of challenge ropes courses is an expert field and, in general, will be undertaken by individuals and companies specialising in the planning and construction of ropes courses.

Challenge ropes courses on school property should conform to the specifications contained in the publication *Common Practices for the Installation of Challenge Ropes Courses in Australia* (refer 8.2 Print and video resources). It is recommended that contractors provide written confirmation that the materials, equipment and installation meet these requirements.

Courses on school property need to be constructed in such a way that if the location is accessible to the public and the ropes course cannot be made secure when not in use, the key sections should be able to be dismantled and locked away.

Where a school has its own challenge ropes course, it should develop a written maintenance plan specifying the checks and maintenance required as well as the time span between checks. Where the school is proposing to use a challenge ropes course that is owned by somebody else, the operator must be able to provide written evidence that a recent maintenance check has been conducted. Camps accredited through the Australian Campsite Accreditation Program will have written evidence of safe construction and regular maintenance checks.

Regardless of the recency of maintenance checks, prior to each use of a ropes course an experienced staff member should make a basic visual inspection of the site and ropes course including:

- the integrity of materials such as rope, wire rope, cable, wood, anchor points and connectors
- the soundness of tree limbs in the area
- the condition of the surrounding ground surface and any soft-fall material.

4.5 Planning and preparation

The planning and preparation for challenge ropes course activities should include the implementation of risk and safety management processes for identifying and controlling hazards, and emergency management planning to identify actions to be taken during and following an emergency (refer 2.2 Risk and safety management, and 2.3 Emergency management planning).

Where the challenge ropes course activity is to be conducted by an instructor, the teacher-in-charge may wish to visit the course in advance to:

- check the course visually and physically to ensure its suitability for the particular group of students
- observe a group of students in action to become aware of where any additional safety measures are needed.

The teacher-in-charge should also discuss with the instructor:

- student preparation and partner or group safety training
- the manner of overall supervision and any specialised skills needed by staff, such as at transitions between elements
- emergency procedures (staff need to be aware of rescue procedures in advance of students participating in the activity).

Students with disabilities or impairments may be able to participate in challenge ropes courses provided particular attention is given to the following aspects:

- the student's level of physical skills needed for balance and muscular control
- the use of additional staff as spotters on either side of the student
- the use of a safety harness and safety ropes controlled by staff
- the lifting and transfer of students by staff and students who have been trained in safe lifting techniques.

4.6 Student preparation

Students need to be progressively introduced to and taught the skills needed for safe participation in challenge ropes course programs. Refer Appendix J Proforma: *Documentation of participant preparation, prerequisite skills/knowledge* for a method of noting student prerequisite skills, including spotting, belaying, use of harnesses, clipping onto belay ropes and other protection, and any other skills essential to safe participation on that particular ropes course.

The psychological preparation of students is as important as the physical preparation, especially for students who are anxious about the activity. Under no circumstances should students be pressured by staff or peers to participate beyond their readiness.

Trust, communication and group cooperation should be developed through lead-up activities. It is important that supervising staff are able to provide the level of support and encouragement that students need in order to feel comfortable about learning through experience on the course.

Most challenge ropes course elements require at least two spotters for each student who is participating. It is important that students are taught the skills of spotting (refer 4.8 Specific safety aspects) and undertake this task responsibly. Information on spotting is available in *Spotting: Safe and Easy* (refer 8.2 Print and video resources).

Where safety harnesses are to be used, students must be trained and given carefully monitored practice on clipping on and locking carabiners to safety harnesses and how to belay. Prior to participation, a staff member should, in general, physically check to ensure that the harness is correctly clipped on.

Immediately prior to undertaking a challenge ropes course, students must be given clear instructions to ensure that they know what is required and understand the safety aspects.

Students need to be briefed about taking care on the final descent when the challenge of the course is completed; accidents can occur due to inattention in dismounting.

The number of students permitted to perform on each element at the one time (usually one at a time) needs to be carefully monitored.

4.7 Specific equipment and clothing

Loss of grip, a slip or a fall while participating on a ropes course may result in skin burns and abrasions. Clothing that reduces possible skin contact to a minimum should be worn. Participants should not wear or carry anything that could become caught or be dislodged in the event of a slip or fall.

Clothing and equipment considerations:

- solid footwear—no leather soles, no thongs or bare feet
- long trousers—some activities may require leg contact with the ropes

- no loose hair or loose clothing, including drawstrings (critical when friction devices such as a 'figure 8' are used)
- all objects should be removed from pockets
- no jewellery, especially rings and dangling earrings
- spectacles may need to be worn with straps
- the friction caused by the swift movement of ropes (for example, during belaying) may cause burns if clothing is synthetic
- gloves may be appropriate on those elements involving a dynamic belay
- a harness, not a waist belt, is the appropriate safety device
- safety equipment such as belay ropes and harnesses need to be in good condition.

Use of helmets for low ropes courses:

- on low elements participants are protected by spotters, but there may be occasions where a combination of the teacher's knowledge of the group and the particular elements suggests that helmets should be worn
- where helmets are provided for use by the site operator for a low ropes challenge ropes course, they should be worn by participants.

4.8 Specific safety aspects

Safety during the activity is of paramount importance. *Low elements* are typically approximately half a metre or less off the ground. Safety for these courses will be achieved through 'spotting', 'self-spotting' (that is stepping off to avoid a fall) or, where the element cannot be safely spotted, through the provision of soft-fall material. Information about spotting is available in *Spotting: Safe and Easy* (refer 8.2 Print and video resources).

High elements are generally six to ten metres off the ground with participants protected by a safety belay system. Transition belay systems on each platform between high elements are essential to ensure the safety of participants when they are between the safety belay of the element just completed and the one about to be started. Staff involved in belaying should have experience in belaying techniques.

Where a ropes course has elements at a height that falls between the 'high' and 'low' categories, teachers must satisfy themselves that students can participate safely and that adequate supervision can be provided. Additional precautions might include:

- additional spotters/staff
- extra protection built into the element, such as a wire or rope mesh on the outside of a Burma bridge
- additional soft-fall material.

Spotting and belaying skills must be carefully taught to students, who should not be permitted to spot or belay without direct supervision unless they have developed appropriate levels of expertise for the activity (refer Appendix J Proforma: *Documentation of participant preparation, prerequisite skills/knowledge*).

Spotting helps to protect the student's head and upper body through physical support from a spotter. The aim is to break the fall, not to catch the person nor to keep the person on the element when they begin to fall.

Self-spotting is used on some elements where 'spotting' is not the best form of protection for the participant or where spotting might be unsafe (for the spotter or participant) and other forms of supervision are used, such as direct supervision by staff.

An important focus of the safety dimension is the level of trust and cooperation built up in the group beforehand. As a result of this, students will become much more skilled in spotting and belaying and much more aware of the necessity for vigilance and support while performing on the course.

Staff need to model safe practices at all times. Students should be warned against unsafe actions such as shaking and bouncing on ropes.

Students who are not directly involved with the particular element should ideally be involved in encouraging the student who is currently executing the challenge task and must be given clear instructions of what they can do while they wait for their turn.

Where high elements are included in a challenge ropes course, at least one staff member needs to be trained in appropriate rescue techniques and procedures, and all staff need to be aware of these. Relevant rescue equipment, such as rope slings and carabiners, should be placed nearby.

As both trees and metal cables are potentially very dangerous during high wind, lightning and electrical storms, activities should be curtailed at such times.

Appropriate emergency planning needs to be organised (refer 2.3 Emergency management planning).

4.9 Flying foxes

Flying foxes are not approved as playground equipment in government schools in Victoria. They may, however, be appropriately erected, sited and used at camps provided that:

- they can be locked or have the carriage removed when not in use
- staff supervise all use of the flying fox
- all students attending the camp are carefully briefed on the use of the flying fox, and the dangers associated with it
- appropriate safety precautions are taken in the construction and maintenance of the flying fox.

Since flying foxes can be dangerous due to aspects of height, speed and gravity, inexpert use can result in serious injury. Only one student at a time should be permitted to ride on a flying fox.

Flying foxes need to be constructed by expert personnel. Camps accredited through the Australian Campsite Accreditation Program will have written evidence of safe construction and regular maintenance checks as per recommendations for ropes courses above.

Both the teacher-in-charge and any instructor should undertake a basic visual inspection (refer 4.4 Construction and maintenance of challenge ropes courses) of the flying fox prior to use. In general, staff should supervise both the mounting and dismounting points. Transition belay systems (refer 4.8 Specific safety aspects) may need to be used if the starting platform is relatively high and unprotected or where a student cannot step off easily onto the ground.

In most instances a harness is recommended for the rider on a flying fox. Where a seat is provided for the rider, a harness is generally advisable depending on the height and speed of the ride and/or the abilities of the rider.

For additional information refer to *Flying Foxes—It's the Little Things That Count* listed in 8.2 Print and video resources.

4.10 Obstacle courses

Obstacle courses contain a number of elements constructed of various materials and placed in a circuit.

Obstacle courses are mostly used to test stamina and fitness. Competitive factors are often involved where students compete against their best previous time or against the times of others. The inclusion of competition in activities introduces additional risk and should not be used until students have appropriate skill levels.

Students should be given careful instruction in the requirements for each element in advance and should have time for familiarisation and practice. Treated pine is often used in obstacle courses and tends to be slippery in wet conditions. Staff need to be vigilant at elements that may present additional risk for less agile students.

4.11 First aid

A comprehensive first aid kit must be located at the venue or be readily accessible during the activity (refer 2.11 First aid).

5. Bushwalking

5.1 Preamble

Bushwalking refers to activities involving walking or hiking over open countryside or through bushland. A school bushwalking activity would usually extend from half a day through to several days or a week.

Student bushwalking activities should always contain a high level of interest, presenting a challenge, an element of adventure and opportunities to observe and learn about the area. The length and difficulty of the route should be selected so that on overnight bushwalks, groups generally arrive in camp well before dark, with sufficient energy left to make camp, prepare a meal and enjoy exploring the surroundings. Variations to this may be appropriate in some situations, such as the desirability of walking at cooler times of the day. The amount of time needed will depend on the experience of the group and the purpose of the trip.

5.2 Staff–student ratio

A minimum of two staff is required, one of whom is a teacher employed by the Department of Education or school council. When determining the staff–student ratio, the age, fitness and experience of students and staff must be considered, together with the length of the bushwalk and the locality.

The minimum ratio is 1:10 for day bushwalks.

The minimum ratio is 1:6 for overnight bushwalks.

Where there are students of both genders on overnight walks, staff should include at least one male and one female.

Sufficient staff to ensure appropriate and effective supervision must be provided. In deciding what constitutes sufficient staff, consideration should be given to the age, maturity, abilities and experience of students, the size of the group and the nature and location of the activity (refer also 2.7 Supervision of students).

5.3 Staff experience and qualifications

The experience and qualifications necessary for staff will vary according to the length, location, season and degree of difficulty of the bushwalk. For staff training and/or certification/accreditation information refer to 8.3 Providers of professional development, training, certification/accreditation.

Staff must have first aid training appropriate to the activity. Remote area or wilderness first aid experience is highly desirable for extended walks in more remote areas.

In locations with well-defined boundaries and safe terrain, staff responsible for day walks should have basic experience in bushwalking, current experience in the locality, and knowledge of the participants.

For extended overnight walks or walks in more difficult terrain, at least one staff member should have regular and recent experience in leading trips of a similar nature, at a similar time of the year in similar terrain and weather conditions, and must have well-developed skills in:

- trip planning
- navigation
- interpreting and responding to weather conditions
- leading bushwalks
- group management.

Other staff will need skills and appropriate experience in basic bushcraft and in exercising judgment with groups in the outdoors. On extended bushwalks they should have the experience of several bushwalks of similar difficulty.

Where a teacher intends to inspect a bushwalking location, either within or outside of normal school hours, prior approval should be sought from the principal. Principals should approve such inspection visits where they are necessary to ensure that appropriate safety requirements and educational objectives are met.

5.4 Planning and preparation

The planning and preparation for bushwalking activities should include the implementation of risk and safety management processes for identifying and controlling hazards and risks, and emergency management planning to identify actions to be taken during and following an emergency (refer 2.2 Risk and safety management, and 2.3 Emergency management planning).

The aims and objectives of the activity, as well as the route and terrain, should be selected to suit the capabilities of the students in the group.

The ages, fitness, skill development, maturity and experience of the students will determine the location, duration and degree of difficulty of the walk. In general, students up to the age of thirteen years should be restricted to day walks, and extended bushwalks of three or more days should be limited to students of sixteen years and above. However, these are guidelines only and the physical development (skeletal and muscular) and emotional readiness of a student would be primary factors in determining the length and remoteness of a walk and the difficulty of the terrain.

Walks in some sub-alpine and alpine areas, such as the Bogong High Plains, can be more potentially hazardous in adverse weather conditions. In any area where snow conditions are a possibility, refer to the *Safety in Outdoor Adventure Activities Series*, *Safety Guidelines*: *Snow Activities* (also refer 8.2 Print and video resources).

For overnight and more extended bushwalks, each stage needs to be planned in detail, taking into account students' abilities and the need to:

- include challenging elements, daily highlights, opportunities to observe and reflect on the surroundings and 'peak experiences' to make each day interesting
- allow ample time to cover the distance through the bush, taking into account steep ground, rough terrain, thick scrub, unfavourable weather or slow members of the group

- always be equipped for cold and wet weather conditions if bushwalking in high country in south-eastern Australia at any time of the year
- plan for the prevention and treatment of hot, dry weather risks (dehydration, heat exhaustion), which are of concern in many bushwalking areas from spring through to autumn
- be aware of the increased ultraviolet rays (sunburn potential), stronger winds, lower air temperature, lower atmospheric pressure and, therefore, greater likelihood of rain in alpine areas
- avoid river crossings, however if a river crossing may possibly be necessary in an *emergency*, ensure that at least one staff member is skilled in such techniques and that students are fully briefed on procedures
- check fire restrictions and any 'fuel stove only' designations for the area to be visited, and, if total fire ban days are anticipated, the need to plan for food that does not require cooking
- avoid commencing a walk on a total fire ban day and, when walking in the fire restriction season, the need to plan a route that allows for possible evacuation and the need to obtain information about total fire ban days
- plan in advance with other staff the most appropriate procedures to be implemented in an emergency (for example, in the event of a broken leg or students becoming separated from the group, making sure students know what they must do) (refer Appendix F Procedure if lost)
- leave a copy of the detailed emergency management plan and the route notes with the school contact person and at the base camp
- make contact with the appropriate land management agencies and seek permission as a courtesy and for safety purposes
- include a high carbohydrate component and high-energy snacks in the menu.

Although the following considerations apply to planning for all participants, where students with disabilities and impairments are to participate in a bushwalk or part of a bushwalk, particular attention may need to be given to:

- the accessibility of the tracks for the particular needs of students
- obstacles such as uneven ground, the gradient, the width of the tracks or drops beside the tracks
- the differing abilities and fitness of each student, including those who may require frequent rests
- allowing extra time for setting up and breaking camp, cooking etc
- special needs such as:
  - emergency food and personal medication (carried by the individual student or a staff member, as appropriate)
  - additional changes of clothes
- the availability of a four-wheel-drive vehicle for standby transport.

5.5 Student preparation

Students need to be progressively introduced to and taught the skills of bushwalking. To ensure they gain the maximum enjoyment, it is important that their skill levels and abilities are appropriate for the activity.

Adequate student preparation is an essential part of a safety management plan (refer 2.2 Risk and safety management), and the specific safety preparation of students (for example, demonstrating how to light and refuel a fuel stove) should be documented (refer Appendix J Proforma: *Documentation of participant preparation, prerequisite skills/knowledge*).

Prior to involvement in an overnight bushwalk, the preparation of students should include:

- a range of bushwalks, which progress from short and easy to longer and more difficult
- carrying a fully packed backpack
- an understanding of the personal equipment and clothing needed, including the principle of 'layers' of clothing, and what group equipment is needed
- development of skills in tent pitching, food preparation, bush cooking, map reading and basic first aid
- an understanding of camp practices, including hygiene and protection of the environment.

It should be noted that only those students who are physically capable of carrying a packed backpack should be involved in overnight bushwalks unless arrangements can be made for some of the equipment to be transported to the campsite.

In general, students should not carry backpacks that weigh more than 25 per cent of their body weight.

For extended bushwalks, students must be self-sufficient in terms of emergency items for personal survival (for example, emergency high-energy food that does not require cooking, water, torch, matches, whistle).

Medication for life-threatening conditions (such as Ventolin for asthma or adrenalin for allergic reactions) should be carried with the student at all times (for example, in a 'bumbag') in case the student becomes separated from their backpack. A staff member should preferably have a back up supply, especially of medication for asthma.

5.6 Specific equipment and clothing

Equipment and clothing requirements must be appropriate for the type of activity, the location and the climate. Students should be issued with a list of clothing and equipment requirements.

For overnight bushwalks, students should bring their backpacks, main clothing and equipment items to school well in advance of the excursion, so the teacher-in-charge can check the suitability.

It is also essential that each student's backpack is checked immediately before the start of the bushwalk to ensure that all the correct items are included and that inappropriate items are not carried.

Students without appropriate clothing and equipment must not be allowed to participate.

Clothing and equipment appropriate for overnight bushwalking would, in general, include:

- a backpack with a waist belt, which is well fitting when loaded and which is lined with a plastic bag to keep the contents dry
- a waterproof jacket reaching mid-thigh to knees, that does up securely, covers the hands, and has a roomy hood (to be carried on every walk regardless of the weather)
- waterproof overpants
- strong footwear that is comfortable, well broken-in and in good repair with ankle support (depending on the terrain) and some 'tread' on the sole
- socks—at least two or three pairs that complement the footwear and provide adequate padding and protection (a wool mix is generally preferred)
- a woollen or well-insulated hat (30 per cent loss of body heat can occur through an uncovered head, even if the rest of the body is well covered)
- long trousers, such as tracksuit pants (cotton, including denim jeans, should be avoided, particularly when cold and wet weather is likely)
- mittens or gloves (with a spare set for extreme weather conditions)
- long sleeves and long trousers for sun and scratch protection
- a sun hat, sunscreen and sunglasses
- toiletries and a small towel
- water bottle(s), filled before the trip, with sufficient capacity for water needs during the trip
- a torch with spare globe and batteries
- a sleeping bag appropriate for the conditions (down or synthetic fibre such as hollofil) kept dry in a plastic inner bag
- a closed-cell foam or self-inflating sleeping mat
- eating and cooking utensils, stove and a light weight water bag
- personal medication, if appropriate (for example, for asthma and bee sting allergies)
- a whistle
- personal first aid and hygiene items
- a strong plastic bag for carrying rubbish home.

In addition, staff should carry:

- a comprehensive first aid kit (refer 8.3 Providers of professional development, training, certification/accreditation)
- a repair kit containing spare parts to key equipment such as stoves and tents
- a stove, even if the group plans to cook on fires.

It is highly desirable that communication equipment is carried or readily accessible (possibly in a well-placed vehicle) for use in emergency situations. The facility to contact emergency services may be vital in obtaining urgent medical advice or to arrange for evacuation. Where mobile telephones and/or radios are carried, their range and effectiveness for the route and terrain should be investigated prior to the excursion.

5.7 Safety aspects during the walk

On the track

- At most times one staff member should be located at or near the front and another at or near the rear of the group.
- Students need to be briefed and reminded of any known hazards (for example, cliffs) before and during the walk.
- Regular head counts should be made, especially at track intersections.
- Those at the front of the group should wait at track intersections until all the group is present.
- In general, staff should be close enough to communicate by voice or whistle (where students have been divided into groups, staff within each group should be able to communicate by voice or, in an emergency, by whistle).
- General practice is for the group to move at the pace of the slowest members, who should walk near the front of the group. However, the intent should be to keep the group safely in contact with each other and not to have the fast walkers set a pace that does not suit individual abilities and interest in exploring the area.
- Plan for adequate and regular rest stops according to the needs of the group (a rule of thumb is ten minutes every hour, however some groups may need to rest more often).

In adverse conditions

- Anticipate adverse conditions by monitoring weather forecasts and through direct observation.
- The group must stay in close contact.
- Be prepared to make decisions about taking shelter, striking camp, turning back or taking the escape route if adverse weather (or fatigue) sets in—don't press on regardless when conditions deteriorate.
- During storms, take appropriate action to protect the group from dangers such as lightning, high winds, rising rivers etc. (For example, during electrical storms find shelter away from isolated trees or small groups of trees and wire fences; crouch down away from others, feet together, in a hollow to avoid being the highest object; remove any metal objects from the head/body). The booklet *SES Lightning Protection Action Guide* provides useful advice (refer State Emergency Services and Bureau of Meteorology publications in 8.2 Print and video resources).
- Change and manage wet clothing when the group has reached shelter or pitched tents so that dry clothes don't get wet; put on warmer clothing as soon as the high activity level has ceased.
- Carry some high-nutrition food that does not require cooking.
- Prevention of body heat loss leading to hypothermia is critical.
- In hot, dry weather, plan rest stops in the shade, where possible; ensure that everyone drinks water regularly; and consider travelling in the early morning and evening to avoid heat and greater exposure to ultra-violet rays.

Note: Overexposure to cold (hypothermia) and overexposure to heat (hyperthermia) are potentially fatal and symptoms must be identified early and the person treated promptly.

Campsite selection

- Select a campsite that is flat and sheltered from the wind, but away from hazards such as dead trees and overhanging branches.
- Pitch tents at least 50 metres from running water.
- Ensure toilet areas are at least 100 metres from camp and water sources and that everyone knows the location of these designated areas.

In camp

- Always carry emergency food, warm and waterproof clothing, a water bottle, a whistle and a torch if going on side trips away from the campsite.
- Ensure that all walkers eat and drink sufficiently, including eating a good breakfast.
- Check that tents are pitched appropriately for the weather conditions.
- Ensure that students have minimal impact on the environment and on other groups with whom they may be sharing the campsite.

Fire and stove safety

Fires and open fire places must be used in accordance with the requirements of the fire brigade or local land management authorities. Check to see if fires are allowed and, if so, the following points should be adhered to:

- Where possible, place the fire in an existing fireplace and keep it small.
- Build the fire in an open area, downwind from tents.
- Leave a 3 metre clearance from overhanging branches, flammable ground material, logs, stumps and trees.
- If it is not possible to use an existing fireplace, where allowed, build the fire in a trench at least 30 cm deep.
- Never leave fires unattended.
- Completely extinguish the fire with water so that it is cool enough to touch before leaving the site.

Where stoves are used, care must be taken to ensure that they do not explode or create a fire hazard through an uncontrolled 'flaring' flame. The following points should be adhered to:

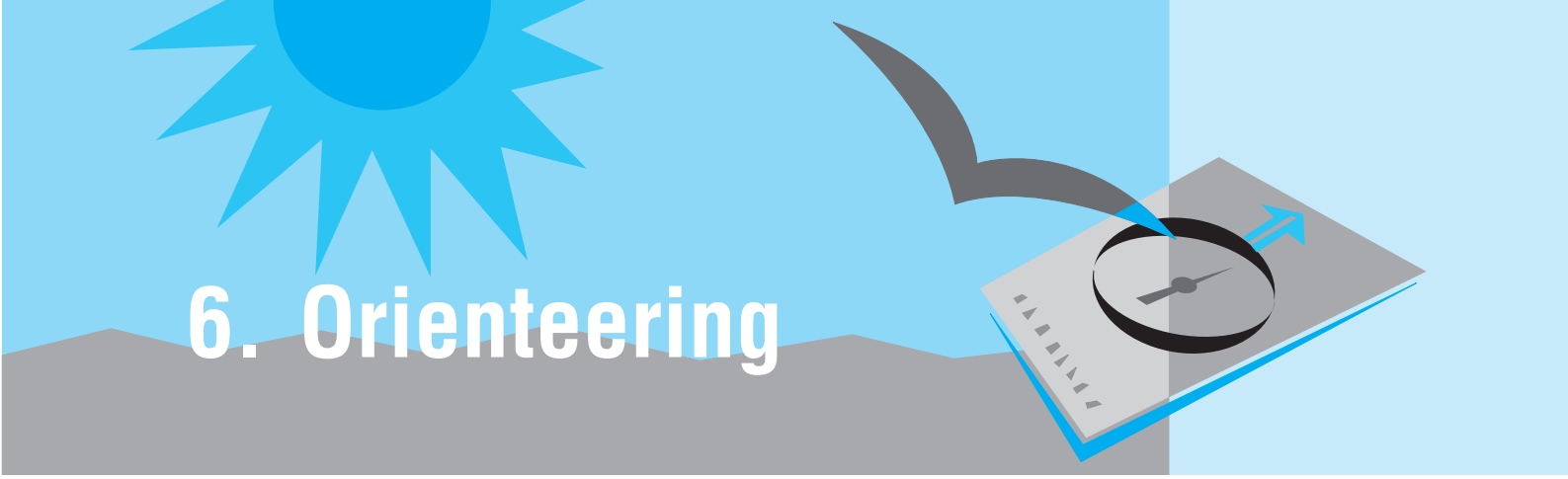
- Give students careful instruction and ample practice in the use of stoves prior to a trip to the extent that they can demonstrate safe stove lighting and refuelling (refer Appendix J Proforma: *Documentation of participant preparation, prerequisite skills/knowledge*).
- Stoves and cooking should be carefully managed, possibly in a designated cooking area, with care given to students moving near stoves.
- Do not bend over stoves when lighting or operating.
- Never fill or operate stoves in or near tents or other flammable materials.
- Move a stove only when the flame is out and the stove has cooled.
- Refuel the stove only when it is cold (check carefully for heat from the almost invisible methylated spirits stove flame) and away from other operating stoves.
- Extreme care must be taken when refuelling stoves; spilled shellite catching fire bursts into a hot flame, whereas methylated spirits burns cooler and somewhat invisibly—both can cause severe burns.

- Place fuel bottles well away from stoves after refuelling.
- Never leave a stove in use unattended.
- Label fuel bottles clearly with 'flammable liquid' stickers and the type of fuel.

5.8 First aid

Staff must carry a comprehensive first aid kit including a first aid manual.

Each student should carry a small personalised first aid kit (refer 2.11 First aid).



6. Orienteering

6.1 Preamble

Orienteering focuses on the use and interpretation of maps. The compass may be used as an aid to navigation.

Orienteering activities in school programs range from simple exercises using a map in the school or base-camp grounds, through to the use of maps in parklands and the full use of contour maps in the bush.

Note: This document does not address safety guidelines for **rogaining**. References to orienteering in larger and more remote bush areas do not include rogaining activities. The recommended practices in this section are for orienteering activities only.

6.2 Staff–student ratio

Where the orienteering activity is conducted outside the school grounds, a minimum of two staff, one of whom is a teacher employed by the Department of Education or school council, must be present. The age and experience of students and the locality need to be considered when determining the appropriate staff–student ratio (refer 2.7 Supervision of students).

The following minimum ratios apply:

- in city or town parklands with well-defined boundaries, a minimum of 1:20
- in neighbourhood streets, and in small areas of bushland with well-defined boundaries and close proximity to centres of population, a minimum of 1:15
- in larger areas of bushland and more remote bushland areas, a minimum of 1:10.

6.3 Staff experience and qualifications

As staff are responsible for student safety at all times, even when students may be out of sight, it is important that students are adequately skilled to undertake the activity. In the early stages of learning, it may be necessary to have roving staff and, at times, staff stationed at some control sites.

Orienteering in school grounds, parklands, streets and small areas of bushland with well-defined boundaries requires competency in managing groups outdoors. The 'Orientation to Orienteering' Course (formerly the 'Level 0 Coaching Course') may provide a useful introduction to orienteering for teachers. For staff training and/or certification/accreditation information refer 8.3 Providers of professional development, training, certification/accreditation.

For orienteering in larger areas of bushland and more remote bushland, staff must be experienced and competent in bush navigation. At least one staff member should have completed the

Level 1 Orienteering Coaching Course (Teachers) or should have at least its equivalent in documented experience in orienteering techniques, instruction and experience in similar bush areas (refer Appendix K Proforma: *Documentation of staff qualifications and experience or expertise in lieu of certification/accreditation*).

If the bush orienteering activity is being conducted as a public event under the auspices of an orienteering club, the organiser of the event will provide the overall organisation and will set courses taking into consideration risk and safety management and environmental sensitivity. The teacher-in-charge of the student group will need to ensure that students enter courses appropriate to their level of navigational competency and fitness.

Staff must have levels of first aid training appropriate to the activity.

6.4 Planning and preparation

The planning and preparation for orienteering activities should include the implementation of risk and safety management processes for identifying and controlling hazards and risks, and emergency management planning to identify actions to be taken during and following an emergency (refer 2.2 Risk and safety management, and 2.3 Emergency management planning).

Prior to their involvement in orienteering activities in larger areas and more remote areas of bushland, students must possess the necessary levels of skill and fitness to bushwalk or run the distance, and must have been introduced to orienteering activities in smaller and less remote areas of bushland (refer Appendix J Proforma: *Documentation of participant preparation, prerequisite skills/knowledge*).

A copy of the orienteering activity details should be left at the school, together with the usual excursion details (refer 2.10.3 Excursion contact person).

For orienteering held in larger areas or more remote bushland areas, at least one standby vehicle needs to be located at the site.

All staff must be aware of any special medical conditions of students or staff, and of search and emergency procedures.

Bush orienteering activities should be postponed on days of total fire ban.

The use of communication equipment such as mobile telephones is highly desirable when orienteering activities are organised in larger or remote bushland areas (refer 2.10.4 Mobile telephones and radios).

Where students with disabilities and impairments are to participate in orienteering activities, particular attention may need to be given to:

- the accessibility of the terrain for students with a walking disability or those in wheelchairs
- obstacles such as uneven ground, the gradient, the width of tracks, drops beside the tracks
- access for a vehicle in an emergency.

6.5 Student preparation

Students need to be taught prerequisite skills. They should be introduced to map reading using basic symbols and features in a familiar environment, such as the school grounds. Progress can be made to surrounding streets in the local built-up area or parkland and then to nearby well-defined bushland. Start with simple courses that have controls at large distinct features (for example, track junctions or hill tops) and on handrail features (roads,

fences, creeks). Only when students have demonstrated navigation and contour map interpretation skills and are confident in their use should they progress to orienteering in larger or more remote bush areas. Student preparation should be documented for the more challenging type of bush orienteering activities (refer Appendix J Proforma: *Documentation of participant preparation, prerequisite skills/knowledge*).

Students should be briefed at the commencement of the activity on:

- how the activity is to be conducted
- the importance of participation rather than competition, although competition may be introduced as skill learning develops
- course boundaries
- what the markers look like
- reporting to the finish line by a given time, even if the course is not completed
- the need for regular hydration
- what to do in an emergency (for example, injury, snake bite, if lost), including where staff are located or what to do if an evacuation of the area is necessary (refer Appendix F Procedure if lost)
- rules of 'fair play' such as not removing or damaging controls and not calling out when at controls
- care of the environment, including respect for wildlife, plants, trees etc.

For orienteering courses in larger areas and more remote bushland, students should participate in pairs for safety reasons, so that if one student needs help the partner can remain with the student but alert another pair to seek help.

6.6 Course location and layout

It is important to locate an orienteering course in a defined area with clear boundaries, such as major roads and fences.

The assembly start/finish area of the orienteering activity needs to be accessible by vehicle.

The perimeters should be easily traversable on foot, with points at which vehicle access is possible for emergency situations.

It is desirable for the area to have a network of tracks, preferably with some useable by vehicle, to assist with supervision and for emergency access.

If courses are drawn up on a cloverleaf design, no student should be far from the start/finish. Where possible, courses of various degrees of difficulty could be provided so that all students can be challenged at their various levels of ability and fitness.

During hot weather, it is advisable for students to carry water and for drinking water to be supplied at some control points and at the start/finish area.

Shelter, such as a tarpaulin, is useful to protect students from extreme weather conditions at the start/finish area.

6.7 Specific equipment and clothing

Students who participate in orienteering activities should carry personal equipment and wear clothing appropriate to the activity and the conditions.

Clothing and equipment considerations:

- light and comfortable clothing for the high activity level required
- waterproof jacket
- solid shoes with suitable grip to match the terrain (such as track shoes), not sandals or thongs
- long trousers and sleeves if students are likely to move off tracks in bushland areas
- hat and sunscreen
- vital personal medication, for example, for asthma or bee stings
- a watch
- map in a plastic bag
- compass (only if appropriate for the activity) carried in the hand with a wrist string or carried round the neck and tucked into shirt when running
- a whistle when involved in bush orienteering
- a complete change of clothing and footwear for after the activity
- a water bottle, depending on length of activity, the weather conditions and access to water.

6.8 First aid

A comprehensive first aid kit must be readily accessible during the activity (refer 2.11 First aid).

7. Horse riding

7.1 Preamble

Horse riding for students is usually undertaken as an elective session or as an activity during a base camp. In most cases the horses are provided by commercial riding establishments. Before using such establishments, schools should ensure that they meet appropriate standards (refer 7.4 Planning and preparation).

Horse riding is a very popular activity for students with disabilities and impairments. Specialised programs are available to schools through the Riding for the Disabled Association of Australia.

7.2 Staff–student ratio

The age, maturity, ability and experience of the students, together with the predictability of the behaviour of the horses and the type of terrain, need to be considered when determining the staff–student ratio. However, a minimum of two staff should be at any riding program. A teacher employed by the Department of Education or school council must always be present.

A ratio of one beginner rider to one qualified or suitably experienced staff member (refer 7.3 Staff experience and qualifications) is required for mounting and dismounting.

Thereafter for beginner riders:

- in a suitable enclosed area, with suitable horses, the minimum ratio is 1:8
- on a suitable trail ride, with suitable horses, the minimum ratio is 1:6 with a minimum of two qualified or suitably experienced staff on the ride.

For semi-experienced riders, with basic horse handling skills (for example, able to trot safely and fully control a horse):

- in a suitable enclosed area, the minimum ratio is 1:10
- on a suitable trail ride, with suitable horses, the minimum ratio is 1:8 with a minimum of two staff on the ride, one of whom should be qualified or suitably experienced.

7.3 Staff experience and qualifications

At least one staff member with documented riding experience and expertise in teaching beginner riders (refer Appendix K Proforma: *Documentation of staff qualifications and experience or expertise in lieu of certification/accreditation*), or an instructor qualified by the Association for Horsemanship Safety and Education or with an Equestrian Federation of Australia Level 1 Instructor Certificate must be present where students are inexperienced riders. For staff training and/or certification/accreditation information refer 8.3 Providers of professional development, training, certification/accreditation.

Where students are more experienced or ride their own horses, at least one member of staff must be an experienced horse rider capable of teaching horse riding skills and maximising student safety. Such experience might include involvement in a pony club, adult riding club or other horse riding establishment and/or competence in training horses, or in events such as show jumping.

The Riding for the Disabled Association of Australia requires its instructors (coaches) to have obtained the minimum of a Riding for the Disabled Association of Australia Level 1 qualification under the National Coaching Accreditation Scheme.

Where an experienced or accredited riding instructor is used, the other staff must have at least some experience in horse riding and be capable of attending to the safety of the students. This experience should include the ability to:

- mount and dismount
- hold and use the reins
- walk, trot and canter
- control the horse through changing paces
- saddle, lead, tie up and care for the horse.

(Refer Appendix K Proforma: *Documentation of staff qualifications and experience or expertise in lieu of certification/accreditation*.)

All staff need to discuss and understand their respective roles and responsibilities prior to the activity.

At least one staff member must be familiar with the horses and the terrain in which the riding will take place.

The publication *Standards for Group Riding Programs* of the Camp Horsemanship Association—The Association for Horsemanship Safety and Education provides useful check lists for ensuring safe procedures (refer 8.2 Print and video resources).

The Riding for the Disabled Association of Australia provides a directory of riding venues in Victoria that meet their accreditation (safety) requirements.

7.4 Planning and preparation

The planning and preparation for horse riding activities should include the implementation of risk and safety management processes for identifying and controlling hazards and risks, and emergency management planning to identify actions to be taken during and following an emergency (refer 2.2 Risk and safety management, and 2.3 Emergency management planning).

As mentioned above, it is important that the horse riding establishment is assessed in advance to ensure that its standards are appropriate for the school group. The Association for Horsemanship Safety and Education has a site accreditation scheme for horse establishments throughout Australia. An establishment with current Association for Horsemanship Safety and Education accreditation will meet approved standards, including staff, horses, equipment, safety, management, risk control and emergency management.

Where establishments do not hold current accreditation, checks should be made on:

- the suitability of the horses for the students and the condition and safety of the equipment
- the suitability of the terrain and any enclosures where the riding will take place
- the suitability of the proposed program for the ability of the students.

An extended trail ride or overnight trip should only be considered for experienced riders (refer Appendix J Proforma: *Documentation of participant preparation, prerequisite skills/knowledge*), and planning should include the route to be taken, equipment, camping details, the fitness of the horses and riders to undertake long rides, and a support vehicle. Consideration should be given to communication in case of an emergency, which might include carrying a mobile telephone (refer 2.10.4 Mobile telephones and radios).

Permission from the relevant land authority where the trail ride is taking place may be required. The Department of Natural Resources and Environment and Parks Victoria require commercial horse riding operators to have a permit for the use of public land. A booklet, *Horse Riding Code*, is available from the Australian Alps Liaison Committee or Parks Victoria (refer 8.2 Print and video resources).

Where students with disabilities and impairments or medical conditions are to participate in horse riding activities, particular attention may need to be given to:

- staff–student ratios—the student may require support on either side as well as an instructor leading the horse
- the use of a mounting ramp for the safety of the rider and the helpers
- the training of staff and/or helpers on how to lift and transfer the student's weight across to the horse. (The Riding for the Disabled Association of Australia's *Volunteer Information Booklet* contains such advice (refer 8.2 Print and video resources). Lifting may need to be a slow process to enable the student's muscles to adapt to the change of position.)
- the selection of a stocky horse for students who ride 'heavier' due to a lack of balance and restricted coordination, so that the horse is not overstressed and less likely to misbehave
- frequent checks during a trail ride for fatigue and loss of concentration (regular rests may need to be taken so that students can alter their weight and use different muscles)
- checking that students with Down Syndrome do not have a condition known as 'atlanto-axial instability' (greater than average neck mobility). Students with this condition should not be permitted to undertake riding activities
- students with epilepsy, who may need a helper walking beside them (refer Riding for the Disabled Association of Australia's *Volunteer Information Booklet*).

7.5 Student preparation

Where students are *beginning riders*, their preparation before riding should include:

- information on what the activity will involve and how it will be conducted
- awareness of what muscles will be used and how their legs may feel on dismounting
- information about how to behave around horses (for example, to be quiet and calm; make no sudden movements; to be alert, particularly when standing and holding a horse, in order to avoid being stepped on or getting too close to another horse)
- information on protective clothing, including the need for long pants and helmets, boots or shoes with distinct heels, and why they are worn (refer 7.6 Specific equipment and clothing), as well as the unsuitability of loose jewellery
- basic information on how horses are saddled, tied up and fed
- briefing on safety aspects, as well as care and respect for horses

- information on care of the environment when riding (for example, not allowing a horse to go off the track).

The staff should ascertain the previous experience of each student. Before a trail ride, all beginners should be instructed in basic horse control and should be able to demonstrate basic riding and horse control skills (for example, the ability to maintain a safe distance from the horse and rider in front, and the ability to stop and to turn the horse).

If the trail ride is to go near roads, students should be instructed in safety procedures for riding along, beside or near roads, and for crossing roads. If appropriate to the terrain for the trail ride, students should be instructed in the need to lean forward over the horse's neck when going uphill and to sit back slightly when going downhill. The trail ride should be undertaken to the ability of the least skilful rider.

7.6 Specific equipment and clothing

All riders must wear well-fitting, firmly fastened horse riding helmets that conform to the Australian Safety Standard AS 2063.3: 1988. Velvet hunting hats have been discredited as safety headgear and should not be used.

Where possible, leather or synthetic riding boots with a smooth sole and solid heel should be worn. Track shoes or other footwear may be worn provided the depth of pattern on the sole is relatively shallow (2 mm or less is recommended) and the sole or shoe does not have indents or protruding lugs. Footwear should enable the foot to slide easily out of the stirrup should the rider fall.

Trousers or jeans that fit firmly are advisable to prevent rubbing and pressure marks. Shorts or skirts are inappropriate and loose jewellery is unsuitable.

7.7 Specific safety aspects

A safe and convenient area where riders can handle horses before and after riding needs to be available. This area should be separate from the non-riding public.

Horse riding sessions should begin in a confined area where staff can assess student ability. The arena should have fences at least 105 cm in height with gates, and a surface that provides good footing and is free of obstacles.

Trails should have safe footing and clearance, be located away from main highways, be rated for levels of difficulty, and have emergency access.

It is recommended that riding equipment is checked to ensure that:

- girths do not have cracks, splits or worn stitching
- stirrup leathers have not split or worn thin, and do not have worn stitching
- stirrup irons are not too small or too large for the rider's boots
- bridles have not worn thin, and do not have worn stitching
- bits are not worn at the joints
- saddles and saddle cloths fit comfortably according to recognised 'horsemanship' standards.

Staff need to have a lead rope available and know how to use it to lead correctly from another horse.

Special care needs to be taken when riding along or beside roads. Staff and students should be aware of relevant safety measures, which include:

- riding in single file with a staff member at the front and back
- procedures to be observed when crossing roads and when vehicles pass
- observing the 'keep to the left' rules and following traffic regulations, including warning signals, as the horse and rider are considered to be a vehicle
- keeping all riders on the same side of the road, although where verges are wide, either side of the road may be used.

Horses should not be ridden in a thunderstorm.

7.8 First aid

A comprehensive first aid kit must be kept at the activity base site, and a portable first aid kit is to be carried on trail rides (refer 2.11 First aid).

8. Resources

8.1 Organisations

Australian Alps Liaison Committee
PO Box 20
Bright Vic 3741
Telephone: (03) 5755 1577
Fax: (03) 5755 1176
E-mail: nbyrne@parks.vic.gov.au

Australian Council for Health, Physical Education and Recreation Inc (ACHPER)
GPO Box 412C
Melbourne Vic 3001
Telephone: (03) 9686 4611
Fax: (03) 9686 4622
E-mail: achvic@netwide.com.au

Australian Trail Horse Riders Association (Vic)
7 Searle Court
North Dandenong Vic 3175
Telephone: (03) 9795 7730
Fax: (03) 9795 7730

Camping Association of Victoria Inc
332 Banyule Road
View Bank Vic 3084
Telephone: (03) 9457 5434
Fax: (03) 9457 5438
E-mail: camping@ozemail.com.au

Sport and Recreation Victoria
Level 4, 55 Collins Street
Melbourne Vic 3000
Telephone: (03) 9666 4200
Fax: (03) 9666 4266
E-mail: sportrec@vicnet.net.au
Internet: http://www.vicnet.net.au/~sportrec/srvhome.htm

Federation of Victorian Walking Clubs (VicWalk) Inc
GPO Box 815F
Melbourne Vic 3001
Telephone: (03) 9421 3100
Fax: (03) 9421 3134
E-mail: vicwalk@vicnet.net.au
Internet: http://www.vicnet.net.au/~vicwalk

Project Adventure Australia (PAA)
c/- Camping Association of Victoria Inc
Telephone: (03) 9457 6494
Fax: (03) 9457 5438
E-mail: projadv@ozemail.com.au

Red Cross Society
171 City Road
Southbank Vic 3006
Telephone: (03) 9685 9999
Fax: (03) 9685 9898
E-mail: redcross@vicnet.net.au

Riding for the Disabled Association of Australia (national)
Royal Showgrounds
Epsom Road
Ascot Vale Vic 3032
Telephone: (03) 9372 2126
Fax: (03) 9376 6698
E-mail: scusack@rda.org.au

Riding for the Disabled Association of Victoria
87 Orrong Crescent
North Caulfield Vic 3161
Telephone: (03) 9527 7285
Fax: (03) 9527 7328
E-mail: rdavic@ozemail.com.au

St John Ambulance
98 York Street
South Melbourne Vic 3205
Telephone: 131 394
Fax: (03) 9696 8247

Standards Australia
19–25 Raglan Street
South Melbourne Vic 3205
Telephone: (03) 9693 3500
Fax: (03) 9693 3512

The Association for Horsemanship Safety and Education
PO Box 209
Strathalby SA 5255
Telephone: (08) 8536 6063
Fax: (08) 8536 6115
E-mail: wirraway@olis.net.au

Victorian Bushwalking and Mountaincraft Training Advisory Board
c/- Sport and Recreation Victoria
55 Collins Street
Melbourne Vic 3000
Telephone: (03) 9666 4319
Fax: (03) 9666 4394
E-mail: mel.sporry@dsd.vic.gov.au

Victorian Horse Council
PO Box 749
Werribee Vic 3030
Telephone: (03) 9741 7672
Fax: (03) 9741 6063

Victorian Orienteering Association
332 Banyule Road
View Bank Vic 3084
Telephone: (03) 9459 0853
Fax: (03) 9457 5438

Victorian Outdoor Education Association
217 Church Street
Richmond Vic 3121
Telephone: (03) 9428 9920
Fax: (03) 9428 0313
E-mail: voea@netspace.net.au

Victoria State Emergency Services
151 Sturt Street
Southbank Vic 3006
Telephone: (03) 9684 6666
Fax: (03) 9684 6659
E-mail: vicses@ses.vic.gov.au

8.2 Print and video resources

General safety and first aid

Australian Resuscitation Council (no date) *Policy Statements*. Melbourne (c/- Australasian College of Surgeons, Spring Street, Melbourne).

Bureau of Meteorology and Emergency Management Australia, *Severe Storms: Facts, Warnings and Protection*.

Bushwalking and Mountaincraft Training Advisory Board of Victoria (1994) *Bushwalking and Mountaincraft Leadership*. 2nd ed. with corrections. Melbourne: Wilke & Co. (This publication discusses first aid kits for individuals and groups.)

Department of Education, Victoria *Safety in Outdoor Adventure Activities Series*
- *Safety Guidelines: Rockclimbing and Abseiling* (1991)
- *Safety Guidelines: Target Shooting* (1991)
- *Safety Guidelines: Snow Activities* (1992)

Department of Education, Victoria (1996) *Schools of the Future Reference Guide*. Melbourne.

Department of Education, Victoria (1997) *Managing School Emergencies*. Melbourne.

St John Ambulance (1992) *Survival: Remote Area First Aid*.

Survival Emergency Products (1997) *Survival First Aid Emergency Handbook*. Gladesville, NSW.

Victoria State Emergency Services (SES) *How to Stay Safe* pamphlets.
- *How to Stay Safe during Floods*
- *How to Stay Safe during Storms*
- *How to Stay Safe in the Snow*
- *How to Stay Safe in the Bush*
- *How to Stay Safe on the Road*

Victorian State Emergency Services (SES) *Lightning Protection Action Guide*.

Video: *Call Ski Patrol*. Available from PO Box 275, Armadale Vic 3143.

Video: *Snow Safe*. Available from Sport and Recreation Victoria.

White, J. (1995) *CSL Antivenom Handbook*. Melbourne: Commonwealth Serum Laboratory.

Wilson, B. (1992) *First Aid in the Australian Bush*. 2nd ed. Blackburn, Vic.: Wilderness Publications.

Base camping

Ashley, S., and Anderson, S. (1996) *Recipes for Large Numbers*. Melbourne: Hospitality Press.

Brownfield, Z., Cox, M., et al. (Ministry of the Interior) (1995) *Catering for Large Numbers*. 3rd ed. Fitzroy, Vic.

Camping Association of Victoria Inc (1997) *The Where To Book: Directory of Group Accommodation and Residential Campsites*. Melbourne. (This publication lists and provides details on campsites in Victoria. The association will also provide a list of accredited campsites upon request.)

Camping Association of Victoria Inc (1997) *Camping with Confidence: Australian Campsite Accreditation Program*. Melbourne.

Manuals of the New Zealand Mountain Safety Council, Department of Internal Affairs, Wellington:
- No. 14 *Outdoor First Aid* (1989)
- No. 12 *Bushcraft* (1984)

MacDowall, D. (1993) *Going Away in Groups*. Melbourne: Camping Association of Victoria Inc.

McRae, K. (ed.) (1990) *Outdoor Education and Environmental Education: Diverse Purposes and Practices*. Melbourne: Macmillan.

Paddy Pallin's Bushwalking and Camping: Handbook of Australian Bushcraft and Ski Touring (1988) 12th ed. Sydney: Paddy Pallin Pty Ltd.

Slater, T. (1984) *The Temporary Community: Organised Camping for Urban Society*. Sutherland, NSW: Albatross Books.

Sport and Recreation Victoria (1998) *Sport & Recreation Industry Directory*. Melbourne.

Challenge ropes courses

Camping Association of Victoria Inc (1996) *Flying Foxes—It's the Little Things That Count*. Melbourne.

Project Adventure Australia (unpublished articles available from PAA):
- *Challenge Ropes Course Safety Check*
- *Spotting: Safe and Easy*

Rohnke, K., and Butler, S. (1995) *Quicksilver*. Dubuque, Iowa: Kendall Hunt Publishing Co.

Rohnke, K., Tait, C., and Wall, J. (eds) (1997) *The Complete Ropes Course Manual*. 2nd ed. Dubuque, Iowa: Kendall Hunt Publishing Co.

Rohnke, K. (1987) *Challenge by Choice: Manual for the Construction of Low Elements on a Challenge Ropes Course*. Project Adventure Inc. Iowa.

Rohnke, K. (1989) *Cowstails and Cobras II*. Dubuque, Iowa: Kendall Hunt Publishing Co.

Rohnke, K. (1984) *Silver Bullets*. Dubuque, Iowa: Kendall Hunt Publishing Co.

Webster, S. (1989) *Ropes Course Safety Manual: An Instructor's Guide to Initiatives and Low and High Elements*. Dubuque, Iowa: Kendall Hunt Publishing Co.

Westrup, E. (ed.) (1997) *Common Practices for the Installation of Challenge Ropes Courses in Australia*. 2nd draft document. Available from Camping Association of Victoria Inc and the editor.

Bushwalking

Australian Alps Liaison Committee (reprint 1997) *Minimal Impact Bushwalking*.

Bushwalking and Mountaincraft Training Advisory Board of Victoria (1994) *Bushwalking and Mountaincraft Leadership*. 2nd ed. with corrections. Melbourne: Wilke & Co.

Federation of Victorian Walking Clubs and Sport and Recreation Victoria *Walksafe*. Melbourne.

Federation of Victorian Walking Clubs and Sport and Recreation Victoria *Tread Softly: Bushwalker's Minimal Impact Code*. Melbourne.

Hart, J. (1984) *Walking Softly in the Wilderness*. San Francisco: Sierra Club Books.

Sport and Recreation Victoria (1998) *Sport and Recreation Industry Directory*. Melbourne.

Video: *Walk Softly: Minimal Impact Bushwalking* (1987). Available from the Parks and Wildlife Service, GPO Box 44A, Hobart Tas 7001, and from the Camping Association of Victoria Inc.

Video: *Walk Safely* (1989). Available from the Parks and Wildlife Service, GPO Box 44A, Hobart Tas 7001, and from the Camping Association of Victoria Inc.

Orienteering

Gale, D. (1989) *Elementary Orienteering: Instructors' Handbook*. Clifton Hill, Vic: Orienteering Service of Australia.

Martin, T. (1991) *Let's Get into Orienteering*. Surrey Hills, NSW: Aussie Sports Book.

McNeil, C. (1989) *Orienteering: Skills of the Game*. Wiltshire: The Crowood Press.

McNeil, C., Ramsden J., and Renfrew T. (1987) *Teaching Orienteering*. Doune, UK: British Orienteering Federation.

Norman, B., and Yngstrom, A. (1991) *Orienteering Technique from Start to Finish*. Stockholm: Swedish Orienteering Federation.

Wilson, P. (no date) *Orienteering: A Way of Learning Outdoor Navigation*. Mountain Safety Manual 25. Wellington: NZ Mountain Safety Council.

Horse riding

Australian Alps Liaison Committee, *Horse Riding Code*.

Brooks, A. (1989) *Horse Riding Expedition Notes*. Duke of Edinburgh's Award Scheme, Victoria.

Camp Horsemanship Association—The Association for Horsemanship Safety and Education *Standards for Group Riding Programs* (New edition in progress.) Available from the Camping Association of Victoria Inc.

Longden, M. (1988) *Teaching Disabled Riders*. Blackburn, Vic: Acacia Press.

Riding for the Disabled Association of Australia (1995) *RDAA Coaching Manual*. Melbourne.

Riding for the Disabled Association of Australia (1996) *Volunteer Information Booklet*. Melbourne.

Standards Australia (1988) *Australian Standard 2063.3*. Melbourne.

8.3 Providers of professional development, training, certification/ accreditation

Investigating qualifications

Camp and activity organisers, principals or school councils wishing to confirm that the qualifications held by excursion staff are suitable for the activities to be undertaken should examine the fine detail of each qualification to ensure that it addresses Department of Education requirements and guidelines for each activity and for general safety and supervision provisions.

In addition to the organisations noted below, a number of universities and TAFE institutes provide degree programs and certificates in outdoor education and adventure leadership.

Staff holding university degrees in outdoor education will frequently have in-depth training and knowledge in activity areas that is superior to or at least equivalent to community qualifications.

General safety and first aid

St John Ambulance
98 York Street
South Melbourne Vic 3205
Telephone: 131 394
Fax: (03) 9696 8247

(This organisation provides a program of training and certification of individuals in general and remote area first aid, as well as advice on the preparation of first aid kits.)

Red Cross Society
171 City Road
Southbank Vic 3006
Telephone: (03) 9685 9999
Fax: (03) 9685 9898
E-mail: redcross@vicnet.net.au

(This organisation provides a program of training and certification as well as advice on the preparation of first aid kits.)

As well as the St John Ambulance and the Red Cross Society there are several other university, TAFE and private providers of courses in first aid, remote area first aid, and remote area emergency response. Information about these may be obtained through their advertisements in professional journals and school publications.

Base camping

Camping Association of Victoria Inc
332 Banyule Road
View Bank Vic 3084
Telephone: (03) 9457 5434
Fax: (03) 9457 5438
E-mail: camping@ozemail.com.au

(This organisation provides a program of accreditation of campsites and professional development in camp program and activity planning.)

People Outdoors
c/- Camping Association of Victoria Inc
332 Banyule Road
View Bank Vic 3084
Telephone: (03) 9457 6383
Fax: (03) 9457 5438

(This organisation assists people with disabilities to become involved in camping and outdoor adventure experiences in the community, and provides training for volunteers who wish to assist in camping and outdoor experiences with people with disabilities.)

Challenge ropes courses

Project Adventure Australia (PAA)
c/- Camping Association of Victoria Inc
Telephone: (03) 9457 6494
Fax: (03) 9457 5438
E-mail: projadv@ozemail.com.au

(This organisation provides a program for training of leaders.)

Bushwalking

Victorian Bushwalking and Mountaincraft Training Advisory Board
c/- Sport and Recreation Victoria
55 Collins Street
Melbourne Vic 3000
Telephone: (03) 9666 4319
Fax: (03) 9666 4394
E-mail: mel.sporry@dsd.vic.gov.au

(This organisation provides a program of training and certification of leaders.)

Orienteering

Victorian Orienteering Association
332 Banyule Road
View Bank Vic 3084
Telephone: (03) 9459 0853
Fax: (03) 9457 5438

(This organisation provides a program of training and certification of leaders.)

Horse riding

The Association for Horsemanship Safety and Education
PO Box 209
Strathalbyn SA 5255
Telephone: (08) 8536 6063
Fax: (08) 8536 6115
E-mail: wirraway@olis.net.au

(This organisation provides a program of training and certification of leaders and accreditation of venues.)

Riding for the Disabled Association of Australia (national)
Royal Showgrounds
Epsom Road
Ascot Vale Vic 3032
Telephone: (03) 9372 2126
Fax: (03) 9376 6698
E-mail: scusack@rda.org.au

(This organisation provides a program of training and certification of leaders.)

Riding for the Disabled Association of Victoria
87 Orrong Crescent
North Caulfield Vic 3161
Telephone: (03) 9527 7285
Fax: (03) 9527 7328
E-mail: rdavic@ozemail.com.au

(This organisation provides a program of training and certification of leaders.)

Outdoor Education P–12

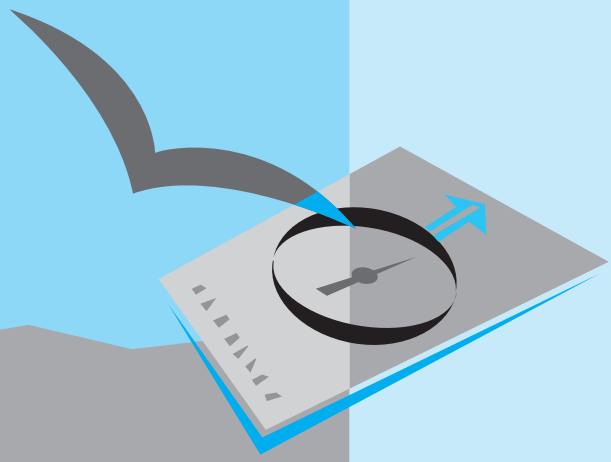
Australian Council for Health, Physical Education and Recreation Inc (ACHPER)
GPO Box 412C
Melbourne Vic 3001
Telephone: (03) 9686 4611
Fax: (03) 9686 4622
E-mail: achvic@netwide.com.au

(This organisation provides professional development opportunities and resources in outdoor adventure activities.)

Victorian Outdoor Education Association
217 Church Street
Richmond Vic 3121
Telephone: (03) 9428 9920
Fax: (03) 9428 0313
E-mail: voea@netspace.net.au

(This organisation provides professional development opportunities in outdoor education.)

Appendices



Appendix A

PROFORMA: PARENT EXCURSION CONSENT

1. Title of excursion

2. Destination of excursion

3. Date(s) of excursion

4. Information about the excursion

Note 1:
Schools need to provide sufficient information to parents about the nature of the proposed excursion (including a description of the activities to be undertaken) and the degree of supervision, to enable the parents to give informed consent to their child's participation. This information should be included here or provided as an attachment. As a minimum, such information would normally include:

- departure and return times
- a description of the excursion, including the premises to be used, sleeping arrangements, general and specific activities and travel arrangements
- staff members and supervision
- cost (and refund policy)
- clothing and equipment needed
- name of excursion contact person and contact details
- other matters that may apply, such as behaviour, dress, selection of students (if places are limited).

If the above information is provided as an attachment, the school should identify and list in this part of the form the specific documents which are attached under a subheading 'attachments'.

5. Student behaviour

Note 2:

Schools may choose to also include the following statement:

'I acknowledge that during the excursion, acceptable standards of behaviour will be expected of the students.

'I understand that in the event of my son's/daughter's serious misbehaviour during the excursion, he/she may be sent home. I further understand that in such circumstances I will be informed and that any costs associated with his/her return will be my responsibility.'

6. Parent consent

I have read all of the above information provided by the school in relation to the above excursion including any attached material.

I give permission for my daughter/son _____ to attend.

Parent/guardian _____ *(name)*

_____ *(signature)* _____ *(date)*

Note 3:

Parents should also complete the form 'Confidential medical information for school council approved excursions', and should sign 'Consent to medical attention'.

Appendix B

CONFIDENTIAL MEDICAL INFORMATION FOR SCHOOL COUNCIL APPROVED EXCURSIONS

This information is intended to assist the school in case of any medical emergency involving your child. All information is held in confidence.

Child's name

Date of birth Year level

Parent's/guardian's full name

Address Postcode

Emergency telephone numbers After hours Business hours

Name and address of family doctor

Medicare no.

Medical/hospital insurance fund Contribution no.

Please tick if your child suffers any of the following:

- ☐ Bed wetting
- ☐ Fits of any type
- ☐ Heart condition
- ☐ Asthma
- ☐ Diabetes
- ☐ Dizzy spells
- ☐ Sleepwalking
- ☐ Blackouts
- ☐ Migraine
- ☐ Travel sickness
- ☐ Other _____

Allergies to:

- ☐ Penicillin _____
- ☐ Other drugs _____
- ☐ Any foods _____
- ☐ Other _____

What special care is recommended? _____

Tetanus immunisation—year of last tetanus immunisation

(Tetanus immunisation is normally given at five years of age (as Triple Antigen or CDT) and at fifteen years of age (as ADT))

Tablets and medicines—Is your child presently taking tablets and/or medicine? ☐ Yes ☐ No

If yes, please state name of medication, dosage etc.

All medication must be handed to the teacher-in-charge prior to leaving. All containers must be labelled with your child's name, the dose to be taken and when it should be taken. (These will be kept in the first aid centre and distributed as required.) If it is necessary or appropriate for your child to carry his or her own medication (for example, asthma puffers or insulin for diabetes) it must be with the knowledge and approval of both the teacher-in-charge and yourself.

Previous experience—Is this the first time your child has been away from home? ☐ Yes ☐ No

CONSENT TO MEDICAL ATTENTION

Where the teacher-in-charge of the excursion is unable to contact me, or it is otherwise impracticable to contact me, I authorise the teacher-in-charge to:

- consent to my child receiving such medical or surgical attention as may be deemed necessary by a medical practitioner
- administer such first aid as the teacher-in-charge may judge to be reasonably necessary.

Signature of parent/guardian Date

The Department of Education requires this consent to be signed for all students attending government school excursions which are approved by the school council.

Note: Parents/guardians should provide written approval prior to their child taking part in any excursion.

Appendix C

PROFORMA: NOTIFICATION OF SCHOOL ACTIVITY (For government schools in Victoria only)

EDUCATION VICTORIA
Achievement through learning

School councils are responsible for ensuring that the activities listed below are thoroughly planned, checked and documented in accordance with Department of Education, Victoria, guidelines for the planning and conduct of camps, excursions and outdoor adventure activities.

The information on this proforma will be used to provide initial information to the emergency services during an emergency. If comprehensive information is required during an emergency, schools will be expected to provide it from the documentation prepared for the activity which is held by the school.

Fax the completed proforma to (03) 9589 0543 three weeks prior to commencing the following:

- overnight, weekend, interstate or overseas activities
- adventure activities
- non-adventure activities which, by their nature, location or timing, may be hazardous
- school closures, pupil free days, combined sports or cluster days.

Notes:

1. An additional sheet listing the actual dates and locations of activities should accompany this form when the same activity is to be repeated on different occasions.
2. For activities involving a group of schools the coordinating school should complete this form.
3. Day excursions should be reported if activities are to be conducted by:
   - country schools—beyond the local town/city
   - rural schools—beyond the local area
   - metropolitan schools—beyond the greater metropolitan area.

SCHOOL NAME AND NUMBER
(including campus if applicable)

TYPE OF ACTIVITY
(camp, bushwalking, school closure, etc)

DATE OF ACTIVITY
(start date, end date) (see Note 1 above)

NAME OF VENUE

PHYSICAL ADDRESS OF VENUE

EMERGENCY TELEPHONE NUMBER AT VENUE

IS EMERGENCY TRANSPORT AVAILABLE AT VENUE? ☐ Yes ☐ No

TOTAL NUMBERS Students Year level Staff

NAME OF PERSON IN CHARGE
(and mobile telephone number if available)

PRINCIPAL'S SIGNATURE

FAX TO THE EMERGENCY AND SECURITY MANAGEMENT BRANCH, (03) 9589 0543

Appendix D

PROCEDURE IN THE EVENT OF SNAKE BITE

As in other first aid situations, prevention is better than cure. Staff should be aware that snakes are more likely to be encountered on warm, sunny days especially in grassy areas and along creeks. If it seems that snakes might be a problem, students should be adequately clad in solid shoes, thick socks and preferably long trousers. A snake bite through such clothing is likely to be less serious.

In the event of a snake bite occurring, the following treatment must be undertaken:

1. Assess the situation and the casualty using the DRABC approach (assess **D**anger, check for **R**esponse from the casualty, check **A**irway, **B**reathing, and **C**irculation).
2. Rest and reassure the casualty.
3. Apply pressure immobilisation over the bitten area and around the limb, using a crepe or conforming bandage about 15 cm wide. If unavailable, use panty hose or other material.
   - apply the bandage firmly enough to compress tissue, but not so firmly as to restrict the flow of blood to the limb below the bandage
   - bandage from the bite to the fingers or toes, then up to the armpit or groin
   - bandage as much of the limb as possible
   - apply a splint to the bandaged limb with a second bandage
   - do not remove the splint or bandage once applied.
4. Seek medical aid urgently.
5. Continue to monitor the ABC (**A**irway, **B**reathing, **C**irculation).

WARNING:

- Never wash the venom off the skin as this will help in later identification.
- Never cut or excise the bitten area.
- Never try to suck the venom out of the wound.
- Never use a constrictive bandage.
- Do not try to catch the snake. However, a description of the snake may assist medical aid.

(Source: St John Ambulance Australia (1989) *Australian First Aid*. 2nd ed., vol. 1., pp. 30–42, 181–182, 195–197.)

Latest research shows that the spread of venom is largely dependent on its absorption via the lymphatic system. Thus there is no need to restrict blood flow and bandages applied during field treatment should not be released.

Speed in applying pressure to the bite and limb is essential. Also, a trace of poison on the pressure pad can assist the laboratory in positive identification of the snake so that the correct antivenin can be given.

Appendix E

PROCEDURE IN THE EVENT OF A BUSHFIRE

If possible, retreat to a safe area such as river, broad track, rock or cleared area. While fire usually travels much faster up hill than down hill, it is virtually impossible to outrun a fire.

- Keep calm and reassure the group.
- Drink as much as possible and carry water.
- Saturate and cover up with clothing.
- Ensure the group stays together.
- Avoid dense undergrowth.
- Keep to tracks if possible.
- Decide on the intended route and signals, and ensure all know them.
- Place experienced walkers in the front of the group to lead and in the whip position.
- Conserve as much energy as possible and take rests, if viable.

If trapped by fire

Radiated heat is intense (320° centigrade compared to flames at 50° centigrade) and can badly burn skin, even some distance from the flames. The body, however, can breathe air at 260° centigrade for three minutes.

- Cover as much exposed skin as possible, preferably with woollen and thick clothing.
- Wrap clothing and other material, such as a woollen jumper, around the head.
- Saturate clothing if possible.
- Wet a cloth to place over the face.
- Drink as much water as possible to guard against impending dehydration.
- Keep low (there is more air available to breathe near the ground).
- Shield the body from radiated heat (the intense heat is greatly impeded by opaque materials and passes over very quickly) by lying or crouching behind a log, stacked rucksacks, mounds of earth, wombat burrows (feet in first) or the bank of the river nearer the fire front. **Never** get into a water tank, as the water can boil.

Appendix F

PROCEDURE IF LOST

Appropriate planning, preparation, organisation and management (refer Section 5 Bushwalking) should remove or minimise the likelihood of anyone becoming lost during a bushwalking activity. However, as a precautionary measure in locations where there is potential for participants to become lost, the following procedures should be included in the planning and preparation.

Note: 'Lost' is defined as not just a navigational error, which could be confidently rectified given some time and effort, but total disorientation to the point of having no idea about one's actual location.

In the event of being lost, two key notions are vital:

Increase your visibility

- Display something bright, such as coloured clothing, tent or backpack.
- A smoky fire is one of the most useful means of attracting the attention of searchers. However, lighting a fire can be extremely dangerous in some circumstances—use good judgment.
- Flash a torch or mirror.
- Use of a whistle—giving three short blasts at regular intervals.

In order to conserve torch batteries and energy, only use a torch or whistle when searchers are heard or are likely to be nearby.

For remote bush orienteering and bushwalking—stay put

- Conserve energy and body heat (that is, make yourself warm and comfortable and await help).
- Seek a sheltered spot, preferably nearby but away from running water (noise interferes with signals and voices).
- Place bracken and other dry vegetation under you to increase insulation from the cold ground.
- Use your plastic emergency bag as a bivouac bag to get into, with all your clothes on, to keep warmer.
- Ration emergency food and water in case help is delayed.

For orienteering in bushland or parkland with well-defined boundaries, use a self-recovery strategy

- Head to a named feature. (Give students a description, such as 'the dirt track on the south of the course', and name the feature, for example, McMillan's track. Have this feature written on the back of the map, as students tend to forget and become overloaded with too many verbal directions.)
- Use a whistle to attract attention.
- Be alert for supervising adults who will be roving or at a designated location.
- Remain calm. (Students who are overdue need to be confident that there is a search procedure in place (refer Appendix G Search procedure for lost students)).

Appendix G

SEARCH PROCEDURE FOR LOST STUDENTS

Where it is suspected that a student is lost

- Confirm that a student is missing (count heads).
- Identify the student's name, description and what they were wearing.
- Ascertain the location where the student was last seen.

For bushwalking

- Send two people (at least one of whom is a staff member) to retrace the group's steps for fifteen minutes only, calling out and listening and carefully observing signs.

  Note: Only ever separate the group into two sub-groups as above—one searching and one staying put.
- Seek additional assistance if the searching group returns without the student.

In situations where there is no immediate access to a mobile telephone or other communication equipment:

- Identify two people (at least one of whom is a staff member) to go for assistance.
- Discuss the route to be taken by this pair.
- Note relevant details on paper for the pair to carry (include the time, day and date, the location with grid reference and land features, the name of the lost students and how they are equipped, composition of the remaining group, events leading up to the incident, intentions of the group left behind and supplies required).
- Equip the pair as a fully contained unit for an overnight hike (include a tent as well as emergency food, clothing, water and a torch and map).

In general, the remaining group should make camp in a sheltered position and keep notes of actions, including times and other relevant information.

Note: The police is the appropriate agency to contact. They will organise the search and call other agencies as required. Also contact the school principal or excursion contact person. The school will in turn contact the Department of Education's twenty-four-hour emergency communication centre and the relevant regional office (refer 2.10.2 Communication during an emergency).

For orienteering

- Check the area (for example, with a reliable staff orienteer running the course in reverse and checking the major tracks).
- Search and continue searching the perimeter (using a vehicle and/or on foot), stopping to whistle, call or toot a car horn and waiting to listen for a response.
- If unsuccessful, notify the police and ranger (if applicable) and the school principal or pre-arranged school contact person. Police assistance should be sought if the student has not been found within half an hour, to permit searching in the daylight.
- Record on paper a description of the student, the area which has been searched, and list possibilities in the area where the search could widen out.

Appendix H

PROCEDURE FOR RESPONSE TO A SERIOUS INJURY

In the event of a serious injury (or illness) to a student or staff member:

- Provide appropriate first aid assistance for the injured person.
- Depending on the circumstances, contact ambulance, medical practitioner and/or the police (from the contact list carried by the leader). Do not delay in the hope that the person will recover.
- Protect and comfort the non-injured students.
- Notify the principal or school contact person who should notify the Department of Education's twenty-four-hour emergency communication centre (refer 2.10.2 Communication during an emergency), the regional office, and the parents of all students. (As the media often reports on situations without full or correct details, it is important that the parents of all students are aware of the incident.)
- Provide students and supervising adults with first aid for shock (for example, keep warm and provide warm fluids if possible).
- Make sure the entire group is safe and warm.
- Keep detailed notes for a comprehensive report of the injury and incident, which must be retained by the school for purposes of legal liability.
- If the media becomes involved, handle them sensitively, isolating the students from reporters and cameras.
- If the police have attended, consider requesting the police officer in charge to inform and handle the media.
- For major incidents, assistance from police media liaison can be requested.
- In the case of a fatality, it is the role of the police, acting for the coroner, to contact the family.

Later:

- Post-trauma counselling for students and supervising adults is important and should be organised through the Department of Education regional office.
- Record and file details of the incident that led to the injury and the resultant action.
- Consider what changes may need to be made through safety and risk management and planning for future activities.

Appendix I

PROFORMA: ANALYSIS OF ACTIVITIES FOR RISK AND SAFETY MANAGEMENT

(Refer Section 2.2 Risk and safety management)

Activity and venue

List safety issues, risks, hazards

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

Can a satisfactory plan be developed to keep participants safe?

☐ **Yes**
Develop safety management plan

☐ **No**
Avoid activity

Consider/include:

☐ Nature of the venue—physical terrain, special characteristics of this location, specific checks for immediate hazards (eg overhanging branches), weather, venue check prior to excursion.

Notes: _____

☐ The activity and level of the activity, its appropriateness for the age, maturity, physical stature, ability level and readiness of the students; suitability of the location for this group.

Notes: _____

☐ Staff qualifications and/or experience specific to the activity, the nature of the group and the area to be visited.

Notes: _____

☐ Participant preparation, including skill development, fitness development and advance briefing.

Notes: _____

☐ Equipment safety—maintenance procedures and checks (including personal equipment, special equipment for specific activities, transport, equipment for emergencies).

Notes: _____

☐ Protective clothing.

Notes: _____

☐ Organisational arrangements for conducting the activity, including staff–student ratios, location, roles of staff and use of safety measures such as spotting and belaying.

Notes: _____

☐ Group management arrangements, including additional activities if waiting time is long.

Notes: _____

_____

_____

_____

☐ Alternatives to the activity plan in case of weather changes, injuries or other circumstances.

Notes: _____

_____

_____

_____

☐ Procedures to be implemented in emergencies; communication plan.

Notes: _____

_____

_____

_____

Note: This proforma provides one suggested way of documenting an analysis of activities for risk and safety management purposes.

Appendix J

PROFORMA: DOCUMENTATION OF PARTICIPANT PREPARATION, PREREQUISITE SKILLS/KNOWLEDGE

Year level _____ (eg Year 7) Activity _____ (eg bushwalking)

Skill/knowledge	(eg Tent-site selection)		(eg Recognition of land features)		(eg Grid references)		(eg Light and refuel stove)	
Name	Date	Initials	Date	Initials	Date	Initials	Date	Initials

Note: This proforma provides one suggested way of documenting participant preparation.

Appendix K

PROFORMA: DOCUMENTATION OF STAFF QUALIFICATIONS AND EXPERIENCE OR EXPERTISE IN LIEU OF CERTIFICATION/ACCREDITATION

Name of staff member _____

Activity _____ Location _____

Year level(s) _____ Season _____
(eg winter, summer)

1. Training **(formal courses, on the job, other)**

Types of training (Name of certificate if applicable)	With whom	Dates	Certificate issued (Yes/No)

2. Activity skill practice/experience—describe:

_____

_____

_____

_____

3. Experience in this or similar locations and seasons:

_____

_____

_____

_____

4. Experience working with this age group/year level in this and/or other activities:

_____

_____

_____

_____

Signed (by above-named staff member) _____ Date _____

Note: This proforma provides one suggested way of documenting staff qualifications and experience or expertise.

Appendix L

AUSTRALIAN CAMPSITE ACCREDITATION PROGRAM

The Camping Association of Victoria Inc in conjunction with the Department of Education, Victoria, developed the Australian Campsite Accreditation Program, *Camping with Confidence*.

It is Department of Education policy that government schools that use camp sites within Victoria, whether school owned or otherwise, are expected to only use those sites accredited through the Australian Campsite Accreditation Program. Where schools use other venues such as caravan parks, motels/hotels or ski lodges, they may wish to refer to the Australian Campsite Accreditation Program accreditation criteria when undertaking their risk management assessment prior to confirming a booking.

Campsites that have gained accreditation will have met twenty-four requirements covering the areas of:

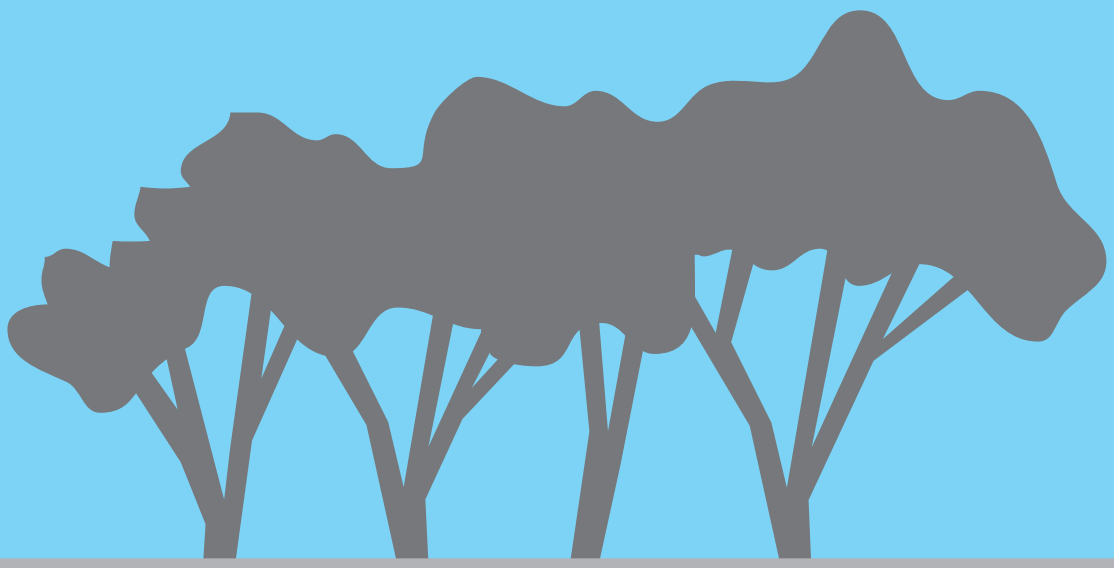
- health, hygiene and safety
- buildings and facilities
- activity equipment and the conduct of activities
- campsite administration
- emergency procedures
- camper supervision
- quality assurance and consumer protection for campers.

Camping with Confidence

- offers a simple means for principals, teachers and school councils to identify campsites that have been assessed as meeting the core requirements of campsite operation
- allows a wide diversity of styles and facilities, programs, catering and services
- is not a rating system for comparing campsites.

Camping with Confidence has been certified by the Tourism Accreditation Board of Victoria, Inc.

Further information is available from:
Camping Association of Victoria Inc
332 Banyule Road
View Bank Vic 3084
Telephone: (03) 9457 5434
Fax: (03) 9457 5438
E-mail: camping@ozemail.com.au



Safety Guidelines: Camping and Bush Activities is essential reading for principals, teachers and school councillors who are involved with the planning, organisation, approval and conduct of excursions and outdoor adventure activities.

The book contains the minimum safety requirements for government schools in Victoria that organise activities associated with:

- Base camping
- Challenge ropes courses
- Bushwalking
- Orienteering
- Horse riding.

Information provided includes aspects dealing with legal liability, risk and safety management, emergency management, supervision, staffing ratios and qualifications, planning, participant preparation, equipment and other specific safety considerations.

Although this book was written specifically for schools, it is equally valuable for youth workers, campsite owners and managers, tertiary students and others involved with organising or participating in outdoor adventure activities.

Department of Education

Victoria ON THE MOVE